DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 454 901 JC 010 486

AUTHOR	Hult, Susan, Ed.; Wilson, Ned M., Ed.
TITLE	Community College Humanities Review, Fall 1998.
INSTITUTION	Community Coll. Humanities Association.
ISSN	ISSN-0748-0741
PUB DATE	1998-00-00
NOTE	86p.; Published annually. Supported by Essex County College, Newark, NJ and Richland College, Dallas, Texas.
AVAILABLE FROM	Community College Humanities Association, c/o Essex County College, 303 University Ave., Newark, NJ 07102 ($15). Web site: http://www.ccha-assoc.org.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
JOURNAL CIT	Community College Humanities Review; v19 Fall 1998
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Community Colleges; *Environmental Education; *Gender Issues; *Humanities; *Humanities Instruction; Liberal Arts; Second Language Instruction; Teaching Methods; Two Year Colleges; *Writing (Composition)

ABSTRACT

The "Community College Humanities Review" is a forum for scholarly work focusing on research, curriculum change, and developments within the humanities disciplines. The fall 1998 issue offers the following articles: (1) "Feminist Currents and Confluence in Southern and Latin America, Women's Narrative: Gertrudis Gomez de Avellaneda y Arteaga and Mary Boykin Chesnut" (Elizabeth Eschbach); (2) "Value and Experience in an Environmental Philosophy" (Frank W. Derringh); (3) "Teaching English Composition on the Internet: Getting Used to New Shoes" (Lawrence Souder); (4) "Women's Growth in Connection: Yezierska, Cather, and Marshall" (Hedda Marcus); (5) "Gender and African Diaspora Issues in Film" (Robert L. Giron); (6) "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Classroom: The Humanist on the Firing Line" (Stephen Dow Beckham); (7) "Autobiographical Theory: Moving Students from the Margins to the Mainstream" (Jill Karle Leahman; Bettye S. Walsh); and (8) "Focus on Foreign Language Standards within the Community College Context" (Richard Kalfus). (NB)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 454 901

COMMUNITY COLLEGE HUMANITIES REVIEW

CCHR

Volume Nineteen **Fall 1998**

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

D.A. Berry

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

TC010486

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Community College Humanities Association

The Community College Humanities Association is a nonprofit national organization devoted to promoting the teaching and learning of the humanities in two-year colleges.

Board of Directors

Members at Large:

David A. Berry, *Chair*
Essex County College
Newark, New Jersey

Constance Carroll, President
San Diego Mesa College
San Diego, California

Stephen Mittelstet, President
Richland College
Dallas, Texas

Daniel Moriarty, President
Portland Community College
Portland, Oregon

Paul Tambrino, President
Iowa Valley Community College
District
Marshalltown, Iowa

A. Zachary Yamba (ex officio)
President
Essex County College
Newark, New Jersey

Division Presidents:

Central Division:
Rick Bailey
Henry Ford Community College
Dearborn, Michigan

Eastern Division:
Noel Robinson
County College of Morris
Randolph, New Jersey

Pacific Western Division:
Bernard Knab
Chemeketa Community College
Salem, Oregon

Southern Division:
John Beck
Vance-Granville Community
College
Henderson, North Carolina

Southwestern Division:
Michael Matthews
Tarrant County Junior College
Fort Worth, Texas

CCHA NATIONAL OFFICE:
c/o Essex County College
303 University Avenue
Newark, New Jersey 07102
Executive Director, David A. Berry
Office Manager, LeaLea Boze-Cale
973-877-3577
www.ccha-assoc.org

The *Community College Humanities Review* ISSN 0748-0741 is published annually by the Community College Humanities Association. Its purpose is to offer a forum for scholarly work, which will provide readers with articles addressing issues of research, curriculum change, and developments within the humanities disciplines. By this means, the *CCHR* contributes to the growth and development of the community of humanities scholars nationally.

Editor:

Susan Hult
Houston Community College
Houston, Texas 77004

Managing Editor:

Ned M. Wilson, Ph.D.
Essex County College
Newark, New Jersey

Editorial Board:

Myrna Goldenberg, Ph.D.
Montgomery College
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Pamela Benson
Tarrant County Junior College, NE
Hurst, Texas 76054

Robert Sessions, Ph.D.
Kirkwood Community College
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 54206

Mary Louise Shannon
Florida Community College at Jacksonville
Jacksonville, Florida 32256

Bill Florence
Chemeketa Community College
Salem, Oregon 97306

Manuscripts for the *Community College Humanities Review* are welcome. Submissions should focus on issues consistent with the purposes of the journal and should be submitted to the Editor through the Community College Humanities Association office at Essex County College. Submissions should conform to the *CCHR* style. All will be acknowledged, and authors will be notified of the decision of the Editorial Board. The Editor reserves the right to make changes not affecting the substance of a submission. Authors will receive three reprints of their articles. Additional copies may be obtained from the CCHA office upon request: include a check payable to CCHA for $15.00.

CCHA wishes to acknowledge the support of Essex County College, Newark, NJ and Richland College, Dallas, Texas.

Publisher:

Community College Humanities Association, Newark, New Jersey

© Community College Humanities Association, 1998

CCHR COMMUNITY COLLEGE HUMANITIES REVIEW

Volume Nineteen Fall 1998

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Feminist Currents and Confluence in Southern and Latin America, Women's Narrative: Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda y Arteaga and Mary Boykin Chesnut 1
Elizabeth Eschbach

Value and Experience in an Environmental Philosophy 15
Frank W. Derringh

Teaching English Composition on the Internet: Getting Used to New Shoes 27
Lawrence Souder

Women's Growth in Connection: Yezierska, Cather, and Marshall 32
Hedda Marcus

Gender and African Diaspora Issues in Film 40
Robert L. Giron

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Classroom: The Humanist on the Firing Line 45
Stephen Dow Beckham

Autobiographical Theory: Moving Students from the Margins to the Mainstream 55
Jill Karle Leahman and Bettye S. Walsh

Focus On Foreign Language Standards Within The Community College Context 63
Richard Kalfus

CONTRIBUTORS

Stephen Dow Beckham, Lewis and Clark College, was the CCHA Conference keynote speaker, 5 November 1998.

Frank W. Derringh is an Associate Professor of Philosophy, New York City Technical College of the City University of New York.

Elizabeth Eschbach is Professor of Humanities, Foreign Language and Visual and Performing Arts at Valencia Community College, Florida.

Robert L. Giron teaches in the English Department, Montgomery College-Takoma Park.

Richard Kalfus is Humanities Chair and District Foreign Language Coordinator, St. Louis Community College.

Jill Karle, Associate Professor of English, has been at Piedmont Virginia Community College since 1989.

Hedda Marcus teaches in the English Department, Nassau Community College, New York.

Lawrence Souder is Professor of English at Community College of Philadelphia.

Bettye Walsh is Professor of English at Piedmont Virginia Community College.

Feminist Currents and Confluence in Southern and Latin America Women's Narrative: Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda y Arteaga and Mary Boykin Chesnut

Elizabeth Eschbach

"Oh, women! Poor blind victims! Like slaves they patiently drag their chains and bow their heads under the yoke of human laws. With no other guide than an untutored and trusting heart, they choose a master for life" (Gómez de Avellaneda 144). Thus wrote Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda y Arteaga (1814-1873) in her novel *Sab*, published in Spain in 1841. Depicting the forbidden topic of love between a mulatto slave and an aristocratic white woman, this book was a work of tremendous controversy and was banned in Gómez de Avellaneda's native island of Cuba in the nineteenth century. The controversy extended well beyond the taboo of mixed relationships, however, for Gómez de Avellaneda, as the quotation above illustrates, exposed the plight of aristocratic women in the patriarchal society of which she was a member.

In the same century, a literary figure of the southern United States, Mary Boykin Chesnut (1823-1886), depicted the fate of women within her own culture in similar terms. "There is no slave, after all, like a wife," she wrote in her Diary (59). A member of the southern aristocracy during the antebellum and Civil War period, *and* one of its sharpest critics, Chesnut, like Gómez de Avellaneda, published her literary attacks on the systems of oppression that condemned both women and blacks to servitude. Now available to modern readers in an annotated edition, her journals and diary, entitled *Mary Boykin Chesnut's Civil War*, edited by historian C. Vann Woodward, reveal an astute mind, capable of exposing the deepest transgressions of her own society.

Both authors lived and wrote during turbulent periods in their respective societies, when social and political upheaval threatened the fabric of their cultures. Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda y Arteaga lived during the decades leading up to the abolition of slavery in Cuba and the Spanish-American War liberating Cuba from Spain. Mary Boykin Chesnut wrote when the fabric of her culture was torn in the strife of the American Civil War. As "revolutionary" thinkers and actors on this stage of events, the perceptions of both Gómez de Avellaneda y Arteaga and Chesnut were well in advance of their times and places. An examination of a number of women writers from both areas, however, reveals that the two were not entirely alone in their outlook on the

fundamental institutions of slavery and marriage and the wider theme of personal liberation. Other significant female voices of nineteenth century Latin America, such as Clorinda Matto de Turner and Mercedes Cabello de Carbonera, both from Peru, treated the themes of patriarchy and racial oppression in similar tones. Likewise, Chesnut was not the only female critic of southern ways. Although such courageous, outspoken writers were rare, the voice of Sarah Grimké from Chesnut's own state of South Carolina spoke too of the horrors of slavery and human oppression.

Though rich in variety and texture, there are common patterns that run through women's narratives from these regions. From the American South, to the areas "South of the Border," feminist tones reverberate through these works. These shared themes are not merely coincidence, however. The experiences of colonialism, patriarchy, slavery, an inflated sense of personal honor, and prescribed perceptions of womanhood were shared by both the region of the South in the United States and certain areas of Latin America from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries. Perceptive women of these societies, through the liberating power of the pen, addressed these cultural patterns in a melange of genres with varying degrees of frustration and denunciation. This comparative study, then, will explore abolitionist and feminist currents and confluence in the voices of women from the South and Latin America, Gómez de Avellaneda y Arteaga and Chesnut providing case studies.

While the area known collectively as Latin America represents complexity and diversity, certain parts of the region shared similar cultural patterns with the Southern United States, due largely to plantation culture and the conservative traditions often tied to agriculturally based societies. In the American South, for example, plantations arose during the colonial period, which brought the concomitant institutions of slavery and hierarchical structure. Similarly, in the areas of Latin America where sugar, rice, cotton, and other labor intensive crops were cultivated, plantation culture arose within the colonial period. As early as the conquest and the early settlement by the Spaniards, people of African descent began to inhabit territories of Latin America. From this early period, blacks came to be regarded as inferior, and were treated with extreme measures. Not uncommon on Latin America soil, as in the North American colonies, were whippings, mutilations, and executions. Furthermore, with the development of the African slave trade, nearly every Spanish household, modest and wealthy alike, owned by the end of the seventeenth century, at least one or more slaves (Burkholder and Johnson 116-123).

With the prevalence of peoples of diverse races, including the indigenous populations, as well as the African, the traditional Spanish obsession with the concept of *limpieza de sangre*, or purity of blood, intensified. Mea-

sures were taken to try to counteract relations between the races, particularly marriage, but miscegenation remained strong, producing an array of racial mixtures, for which Spanish Americans devised complicated and confounding names, such as mestizos, mulattos, zambas, and castizos, to name only a few. As early as the sixteenth century efforts intensified to limit this mingling of blood, however, with the passage of laws, as well as the production of propaganda, citing mestizos (those of Indian-Spanish mixture) as violent, adulterous, and evil. Mulattos (those of African-Spanish union) were branded even more harshly, and the crippling effects on this population by the institution of slavery served to widen the social and economic extremes in a society already hardened into a strict stratification of peoples (Williamson 135-147).

While degrading the African and mulatto segments of the populations, however, the colonial structure of many areas of Latin America came increasingly to depend on this group. In the urban areas, mulattos contributed to the economy through their work as artisans and craftsmen. In the agricultural areas, their labor became the impetus on which the plantation system thrived. This was especially true in the Caribbean island of Cuba, where after 1770 the flourishing sugar plantations absorbed over half of the slaves entering the territories of Spanish America (Burkholder and Johnson 119). By the eighteenth century, the economy of Cuba, like that of the English and French-held islands of the Caribbean, depended entirely on black slave labor (Williamson 142).

In such a milieu, the traditional social order was patriarchal. Certainly, this rigid hierarchical pattern in which a powerful male figure held dominance over vast land holdings and all the people tied to the holdings had been in place in the Old World of Spain well before the conquest. In the Old World pattern, the paterfamilias controlled, with seemingly benevolent concern, the estate and every creature living on the estate, from family members to slaves. As the New World was settled, the transfer of this system was facilitated by the need for strong authority in such a racially and culturally mixed world, and supported by the King in Spain, the ultimate paterfamilias of all his subjects (Williamson 146-147, 165-166). The colonial period perpetuated this order and strengthened it in the agricultural territories, such as the Cuban sugar plantation. Under such harsh conditions, the authority of the master became absolute, as the image of the benevolent patriarch faded into the outline of a tyrant. Under such oppression, female slaves suffered a double burden, for added to their labors was the reality of sexual abuse by the white masters (Williamson 144).

An analysis of the American South from the time of the settlement of the colonies by the English to the time of the Civil War reveals conditions not unlike those just described. A number of writers point to the particularly harsh physical and geographical elements of the region, including scourges of

disease, flood, and drought, that seemed to be more virulent in the South than other regions of North America. Such conditions, claims historian Bertram Wyatt-Brown, fostered a sense of fatality and desperation, as well as a reliance upon archaic values and traditions (29). Within the plantation culture of the Old South stood the enduring symbol of cultural tradition—the figure of the patriarch. As owner of an estate on which potentially there could be hundreds of slaves, the southern planter, by necessity, posited himself firmly in the role of the great patriarch. All would obey him; none would create "differences," or else the system would not work. Not only slaves, then, but women and children were subject to his control. Any challenge to the authority of the master of the plantation was a threat to the patriarchal system, and thus, by implication, to the institution of slavery. Slaves, children, and women, by necessity were to be submissive creatures, obedient to their masters (Scott 17).

Within this context, women were expected to be passive, complacent, and compliant. Indeed the deals of the southern belle came to be celebrated in prose, verse, and folklore. She was innocent and pure, dependent and helpless; she was as pious and devoted as Ruth, all the while being as nurturing, compassionate, and long-suffering as Mary. The southern plantation was not unlike the earlier model of the medieval baronial manor, where the medieval lady was celebrated for her beauty, virtue, and utter dependence upon her lord (Scott 14-15). In the harsh conditions of the South, such archaic ideals held sway over the consciousness of the inhabitants, from the colonial period well through the Civil War era, with vestiges into the twentieth century. In such a harsh environment, southern men were honor bound to provide protection for their ladies. "But the right to protection," explained Southern sociologist George Fitzhugh, involved the "obligation to obey" (Scott 17).

Not only, though, did the institution of slavery force upon the southern woman the necessity of submission, but the existence of slavery also caused the southern white female to be rendered spotless to the extreme of being asexual. If the southern lady were submissive—due largely to the patriarchal order inherent in the plantation system, she was also—in contrast to the black "wenches" that were viewed by their white masters as earthy, voluptuous, sensuous creatures—as spotless, pure, and cold as fresh-fallen snow (Clinton 202-240). These "virtues" were imposed upon the southern lady by necessity in the plantation system, a system that depended upon slavery not only for labor, but in many instances, for the sexual gratification of the patriarch himself. The sexual exploitation of the black female by the white male in the South was justified in part by the rendering of the black female as a sexual, seductive being. The white female—as a member of the superior race, and, most importantly, as the perpetuator of the superior race, was rendered as pure, chaste, and, by extension, asexual (Cash 116).

So in the Latin America context, the ideal of the *criolla* held similar qualities. As a strong class system developed in this part of the world, the Creole population, i.e. those who were of Spanish origin born on American soil, sought to crystallize their superiority among the "lower" groups of African, indigenous, and mixed races, through the position of their women. The ideal *criolla*, therefore, was rendered like her counterpart in North America, a flawless creature. She had to be secluded, and thus, in the tradition of the Muslims of Spain, was kept at home, with access to the public only through the grillwork of her window or balcony. Isolated from the world, the *criolla* was also isolated from reality, from knowledge of the world, an ignorance that led to vulnerability, and hence, dependence on husbands and fathers. This naiveté and dependency on the part of women were cultivated in aristocratic circles of Latin America, especially where mixed populations threatened to taint the purity of Creole blood (Binham and Gross 79-89).

Together the lives and works of Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda of Cuba and Mary Boykin Chesnut of South Carolina present a fascinating antithesis to the assumptions concerning women during their time, class, and place. Had neither woman written a word, their lives alone would negate the formulae for proper plantation women. Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda lived a very public, flamboyant life, full of passion and zeal. The irrepressible Mary Boykin Chesnut also found herself at center stage in politics and social life during the tumultuous mid-nineteenth century. Both women, moreover, by courageously airing controversial topics in their books, stepped well beyond the boundaries of conventional womanhood.

Gómez de Avellaneda was born in Puerto Principe in the Camagüey Province of Cuba in 1814. Her family was privileged, but her circumstances would change with the death of her father in 1823. Her mother quickly remarried, but Gómez de Avellaneda held little affection for her mother's husband, a Spanish army officer. Later, in her teens, Gómez de Avellaneda would sense her vulnerability when she was disinherited from her grandfather's estate for breaking her engagement in an arranged marriage. Meanwhile, Gómez de Avellaneda enjoyed a brilliant education provided by tutors and excelled in literature, French, and history. A sense of loneliness and apartness from those around her, however, characterized her early years. Yet being a voracious reader, she found in books, especially novels, the action, drama, fantasy, and heroism that so inspired her and gave intensity to her existence. As she wrote in her autobiography, "Our greatest pleasure was to be shut up in the library, reading our favorite novels and weeping over the misfortunes of our imaginary heroes whom we adored" (3).

Her passion for learning was matched by an exuberant lust for life, and she yearned for adventure and drama, which she embraced boldly. Travel

helped fulfill some of her longing. On her first voyage to Europe, for example, her heart filled with joy as she sailed under moonlit skies. Even weathering a hurricane at sea was grand adventure for her, as the ship was pitched and thrown. While her fellow passengers recoiled in terror, Gómez de Avellaneda embraced the experience, exhilarated by the display and the peril wrought by nature (Harter 23).

Gómez de Avellaneda's passionate nature led to amorous intrigues, as well. Among her loves were the Spanish poets Ignacio de Cepeda y Alcalde and Gabriel Garcia Tassara, with the latter of whom she had a daughter out of wedlock. Some have speculated that her unconventionality deterred prospective husbands (Harter 27). Marriage eluded her until 1846, when she married Pedro Sabater, who died within three months of their marriage. In 1855 she married Colonel Domingo Verdugo y Massieu, who was an invalid through much of their marriage, dying in 1863 (Harter 34-48).

While she felt dragged down by circumstances in her life, there is no question that Gómez de Avellaneda achieved tremendous acclaim as a writer. Hailed as the first woman novelist of Latin America with the publication of *Sab* and a rival to the great authors of Spain in the nineteenth century, she caused a sensation in literary circles in Madrid where she resided from 1840 to 1859. Here her talents astounded many, her exotic island heritage and dark beauty entranced others, while her independent spirit and individuality left not a few with their tongues wagging with gossip. Still, in the midst of great attention, Gómez de Avellaneda retained the loneliness of her childhood: "I am alone in the world, I live alone and am eccentric in many ways. Although I offend no one, I have enemies, and although I am not at all ambitious, I am accused of excessive pretensions" (Harter 32). Such accusations might well have been born from jealousy, for her work was met with laurel crowns and the highest recognition from the man on the street to the Spanish royalty. The honor that the writer so longed for, however, a chair in the Royal Spanish Academy, was not to be had. While it appears that none questioned her accomplishments, her gender alone prevented her entry into such a prestigious gallery. Gómez de Avellaneda's accomplishments were indeed prodigious. All told, she completed over twenty works, including poetry, plays, and novels (Fox-Lockert 127).

Of all her works, her first novel, *Sab* reveals strains of her true nature, her loves, her fears, and her desperate frustration with the social realities of the nineteenth century. The male protagonist, Sab, some critics have claimed, is a reflection of the author, certainly not in race or gender, but in character and status within a patriarchal system (Somer 114-120). Sab is a mulatto, the illegitimate offspring of a younger son of an aristocratic, landowning family. The central female figure is Carlota, one of five daughters of the elder

Don Carlos, and cousin of Sab. The two grew up as closest friends, playing with one another and reading the same books. Because of Sab's blood relation to the family, he is treated better than the other slaves, but he is nonetheless a slave.

As the leading male character of a nineteenth century novel, Sab displays all the qualities of the tragic romantic hero. Since their blissful days of childhood, Sab has loved Carlota totally, passionately, and unselfishly. Carlota, in her role as the romantic heroine and the ideal *criolla*, is pure, innocent, and naïve, unaware of Sab's sacrificial love until the end of the novel. Carlota falls in love with the rapacious and selfish Enrique Otway, who pursues her solely because he believes she will inherit a family fortune. When he becomes aware of Carlota's family's diminishing resources, Otway becomes disenchanted and wants to break the engagement. Sacrificing his own freedom, Sab, who has won a fortune in the lottery that he might well have used to buy his own liberation, leads Carlota to believe that she has won the lottery in order that she might have a dowry and marry Enrique. Upon Carlota's marriage to Enrique, Sab dies and Carlota awakens to the reality, horror, and tragedy of her plight. She also awakens to the fate of Sab and the sacrifice he made on her behalf.

This novel is "of double importance," explains Lucia Fox-Lockert:

> Historically it is the first novel that denounces slavery in Cuba and is considered the *Uncle Tom's Cabin* of that country. It is also the first novel by a Hispanic feminist writer that deals with the similarities between two social classes: slaves and women. One could even go further and say that Sab, the protagonist, represents all women. (128)

The denunciation of slavery begins on the first pages of the text. As she introduces the character Sab to the reader at the beginning of her work, Gómez de Avellaneda depicts a noble figure, one that is hard to place racially, yet a man with "a face of distinctive features" (Gómez de Avellaneda 28). Although noble in demeanor, educated, and cultivated, Sab, as he points out to his rival, Enrique Otway, is nonetheless a slave, belonging "to that unhappy race deprived of human rights." Sab then depicts the horrors of slavery, where individuals labor "panting," "crushed," "scorched." He concludes, "Ah, yes! The sight of this degraded humanity, where men become mere brutes, is a cruel spectacle. These are the men whose brows are seared with the mark of slavery just as their souls are branded with the desperation of Hell" (29-30).

By the end of the work, the issue of slavery has intensified and be-

come interwoven with issues of women's place within the patriarchy of Cuba as the fate of Carlota and her doomed marriage unfolds. Through the device of a letter written by Sab, Gómez de Avellaneda reveals the nature of this identification of salve and female. In his final act, Sab writes of this comparative condition. Both have sad destinies, serving masters "with humility and resignation," with no other hope than "to obey and be silent." With the sad destiny of Carlota in mind, he in bold language asserts the "slavery of womanhood."

> The slave can at least change masters, can even hope to buy his freedom some day if he can save enough money, but a woman, when she lifts her careworn hands and mistreated brow to beg for release, hears the monstrous, deathly voice which cries out to her: "In the grave." (144-45)

Perhaps more evident than the identification of Sab with his poor Carlota, is the identification between Sab and his creator, Gómez de Avellaneda. Like the author, Sab, from his childhood, had dreamed of fleeing the restrictive world of plantation culture and escaping to the great centers of civilization. As a young boy, hearing the stories of novels and history led his imagination to wander far away. As an adult, his "imagination soared on fiery wings toward the world of the intellect," he writes in his letter. But, like the author, he would hear simply the biting rebuke of society at such fancy notions. "Men will say that it is my own fault that I have been unhappy, because I have dreamt of things that were not within my reach, because being but a nocturnal bird, I have wished to gaze on the sun like the eagle" (143). Gómez de Avellaneda, like her hero, knew only too well the criticism of society that viewed with contempt the aspirations of those who should remain silent and obedient. Both, however, found release through writing. As Doris Somer explains in her essay, "Sab C'est Moi," "The stunning thing about this self-portrait is that it identifies author with apparently helpless slave through their shared productive function, their literary labor conditioned in both by the need to subvert and to reconstruct" (114-15). Gómez de Avellaneda's biographer Hugh Harter concurs that through her writing, the author explored her own identity. Her own sense of alienation from society was "projected on a broad screen of fiction," as she stood "omnipresent behind various fictional roles" (124). In denouncing the horrors of his plight, as well as the greed and materialism that propelled and perpetuated the system that enslaved him, Sab articulates in impassioned, romantic rhetoric Gómez de Avellaneda's stinging criticism of her own world.

Mary Boykin Chesnut did not create fictional character to voice her complaints. With conviction and at times a sardonic playfulness, she wrote of

her world in the genre of diary and journal, placing herself, her family, and her close friends and associates such as the Jefferson Davis family at the center of her narrative. With the qualities of a literary artist, however, Chesnut painted a vivid picture of the southern states on the eve of and during the Civil War. With the added perceptions of a satirist and critic, she bravely confronted the realities of the antebellum aristocracy and slavocracy of which she was member.

Mary Boykin Chesnut was born into a prominent slave-holding family of South Carolina. Like Gómez de Avellaneda, she enjoyed the privileges of her social class, including a solid education gained at home and through academy training in Charleston, South Carolina. Here she studied literature, history, music, and foreign language, becoming fluent in French. Her education served her well, and as an adult, gave her not only a background for her literary endeavors, but enabled her to converse and debate with leading scholars and political figures of her day. Her reading and studies also gave her curious and passionate nature an outlet for a wider world and for deeper intellectual stimulation than conventional southern society allowed a woman (Muhlenfeld 51).

As a daughter of the southern aristocracy, Chesnut, like Gómez de Avellaneda, felt circumscribed by her society's conventional notions of class, gender, and race. Naturally adventurous and passionate, Chesnut longed for outlets for her energies and intelligence that books could only partly assuage. As a child, her family's overland journey from South Carolina to their plantation in Mississippi thrilled her, much like the Atlantic crossing through a hurricane had elevated Gómez de Avellaneda's adventurous spirits. The tumultuous journey that the family covered in carriage and on horseback opened her eyes to the wild and untamed landscape of America, and lifted her, like her Cuban counterpart, from the lethargy instilled by the rules and mores of her native South Carolina. More importantly, while living in Mississippi in a "double log-house" surrounded by Choctaws, Africans and only a scattering of whites, Chesnut began to rethink traditional patterns. "I received there my first ideas," she wrote in an autobiographical memoir, "that negroes were not a divine institution for our benefit—or we for theirs" (Chesnut xxxii).

Upon her return to Charlestonian society, in an atmosphere of concerts, theatre, and balls, she looked back on her Mississippi adventure as a turning point in her life. She later wrote that while there, "I learned many things not in my school books, while I was away from innocent slumbrous old Charleston, wherein the other inhabitants I saw no wrong, and am sure I would never have questioned any existing institutions to my dying day" (xxxii). As she matured, Chesnut continued to be an outspoken critic of the "wrongs" of her time and place, feeling frequently that aloneness that her Cuban counterpart, Gómez de Avellaneda, expressed.

Ironically, though, her social status only crystallized when she married James Chesnut, a member of a prominent family of politicians and plantation holders. Her "heretical" and "decidedly improper viewpoint" concerning slavery, however, only heightened her sense of loneliness (Muhlenfeld 108-109). Escaping the restrictions and tedium of plantation life during only a few brief sojourns to the northern states and England, Mary longed for cities, lights, intellectual sophistication, and cultured civilization. She was not to enjoy such a life, however, but rather had to endure the tragedies of the American Civil War. Interestingly, however, as C. Vann Woodward indicates, during the war, some of Mary's yearnings were fulfilled. The war meant

> An outlet for many frustrated impulses and energies dammed up within her. It meant being involved, challenged, needed, wholly committed, and totally absorbed. It also opened doors of escape from dullness, and boredom, and self-absorption. (xxxviii)

The war also meant the beginning of her life's great work, her Civil War diary. This book documents many aspects of this period. It reflects, naturally, the major events of the war: the battles, the casualties, the political maneuvers in Washington and Richmond, and the tragic elements in national and human proportions. Equally importantly, however, the book reflects the personal journey of the author, as she worked through her attitudes, feelings, and ideas concerning the central issues of freedom and slavery.

Mary's courageous denunciation of slavery was uttered throughout the book. From her earliest entries, she bemoaned the "monstrous system" of slavery. Her abolitionist stance was remarkable, considering that she was not a northern critic. looking with contempt at southern ways, but that she was indeed part of this society, speaking from an insider's point of view. Such a controversial stance was made doubly "critical" by Chesnut's equation of the system of slavery with the system of marriage then in place in southern society. To readers of nineteenth century sensibilities, Chesnut's blatant identification of women and slaves and marriage and slavery was a strongly worded attack on deeply held southern orthodoxies. An entry dated March 4, 1861, for example, reads as follows:

> So, I have seen a negro woman sold—up on the dock—at auction. I was walking. The woman on the dock overtopped the crowd. I felt faint—seasick. The creature looked so like my good little Nancy. She was a bright mulatto with a pleasant

> face. She was magnificently gotten up in silks and satins . . . I sat down on a stool in a shop. I disciplined my wild thoughts . . . You know how women sell themselves and are sold in marriage, from queens downward, eh? You know what the Bible says about slavery and marriage. Poor women. Poor slaves. (15)

The women of the South, moreover, were doubly burdened, according to Chesnut, due to the sexual dynamics of the institution of slavery. Repeatedly, Chesnut unleashed her disgust at the patriarchy of the South that allowed miscegenation and tolerated the sexual degradation of black women at the hands of their white owners. White southern women, those southern belles Chesnut describes as "soft and sweet—low toned, indolent, graceful, quiescent," simply tolerated such behavior, continued the frustrated Chesnut, especially in their own husbands:

> Like the patriarchs of old our men live all in one house with their wives and their concubines, and the mulattos one sees in every family exactly resemble the white children—and every lady tells you who is the father of all the mulatto children in everybody's household, but those in her own she seems to think drop from the clouds, or pretends to think so. (29)

Such iniquities and brutalities that Chesnut described in her book, however, were soon to pass as the Confederacy itself collapsed after the horror of the war. As Chesnut wrote of the details of her family's losses, she was aware of a much deeper and wider finale, and that was the end of the southern patriarchy. Her book closed with a reflection on the survivors of the war, including significantly her father-in-law, a figure she had criticized throughout the book for a number of reasons, including his selfish and greedy materialism, as well as his relationship, abusive and sexual in nature, with his slaves. Although despondent over the suffering around her, Chesnut was also perspicacious and discerning in her assessment of the fading of her society. The year, 1865, she recognized, meant the end of her culture due to the fading of the patriarch, the "archetype" of which she recognized in her father-in-law, the contumacious and obstinate ninety-three year old Colonel Chesnut. "Partly patriarch, partly grand seigneur," she wrote, "this old man is of a species that we will see no more. The last of the southern planters who ruled this Southern world. He is a splendid wreck" (814).

Chesnut edited her work close to twenty years after she began her initial journal. Much of what were abbreviated entries, impressionistic and punctuated in their brevity, became with her careful and deliberate editing extended essays and flowing prose. It seems clear that Chesnut felt her Diary to be her life's masterpiece, her true creation. This ambitious, gifted woman, whose outlets for self-expression were so limited, found in her writing the means to self-fulfillment and liberation. Ironically, though, she viewed her husband's career as lawyer, senator, and military commander as more important than her own literary ambitions. Today, however, it is Mary Boykin Chesnut who is remembered in history as a major Civil War figure, rather than James Chesnut.

So with Gómez de Avellaneda, writing brought her a liberating release, as well as renown, from her own time to the present. Writing at a time when Cuba, like the southern states, was experiencing a turbulent period of transition, Gómez de Avellaneda's voice told of a crisis in the island's patriarchal system and was Cassandra-like in its prophecy of the demise of old authorities, much like Chesnut's reflection on her father-in-law tolled like a death-knell of the fading of the old order. Both women, moreover, developed their abolitionist sensibilities early in life, ideals which would lead to feminist concerns as they experienced marriage and the realities of female adulthood (Miller 209). Through the empowerment of the pen, their deepest convictions were given open expression, their controversial nature bringing admonishment, but also fame and praise. Both Gómez de Avellaneda and Chesnut, two tremendously brilliant and energetic women, would have preferred to lead more openly public lives, but denied these opportunities, they wrote of their frustrations. Gómez de Avellaneda thinly veiled her own plight behind the fictional characters she created. Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda's personal voice, nonetheless, like Mary Boykin Chesnut's carried powerful themes that resound to this day. In the works of both women, the motifs of abolitionism, feminism, and the indictment of patriarchy were clearly and unequivocally stated, and thus is each remembered and celebrated not only in the literary and cultural arena of the world at large, but also within their respective cultures that they both denounced and embraced.

Works Cited

Primary Sources:

Chesnut, Mary Boykin. *Mary Chesnut's Civil War.* Ed. C. Vann Woodward. New Haven: Yale UP, 1981.

Gómez de Avellaneda, Gertrudis. *Sab and Autobiography.* Trans. Nina M. Scott. Austin: U of Texas P, 1993.

Secondary Sources:

Bingham, Marjorie Wall and Susan Hill Gross. *Women in Latin America.* St. Louis Park: Glenhurst, 1985.

Burkholder, Mark A. and Lyman L. Johnson. *Colonial Latin America.* New York: Oxford UP, 1994.

Cash, W. J. *The Mind of the South.* New York: Knopf, 1941.

Clinton, Catherine. *The Plantation Mistress: Woman's World in the Old South.* New York: Pantheon, 1982.

Fox-Lockert, Lucia. *Women Novelists in Spain and Spanish America.* Metuchen and London: Scarecrow P, 1979.

Harter, Hugh A. *Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda.* Boston: Twayne, 1981.

Miller, Beth. "Gertrude the Great: Avellaneda, Nineteenth Century Feminist." *Women in Hispanic Literature: Icons and Fallen Idols.* Berkeley: U of California P, 1983. 201-214.

Muhlenfeld, Elisabeth. *Mary Boykin Chesnut: A Biography.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1981.

Scott, Ann Firor. *The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics 1830-1930.* Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1970.

Sommer, Doris. "Sab, C'est Moi." *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America.* Berkeley: U of California P, 1991. 114-137.

Williamson, Edwin. *The Penguin History of Latin America.* London: Penguin, 1992.

Wyatt-Brown, Bertram. *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South.* NY: Oxford UP, 1982.

Value and Experience in an Environmental Philosophy

Frank W. Derringh
New York City Technical College of the City University of New York

Expounding upon the value of nature is an ironic endeavor. Superficially, speech is our most cultural development; hence, using language to express bonds between nature and humanity reasserts our embeddedness in the very society that separates us from nature.

Nonetheless, those concerned for the survival of nature, understood here as the other-than-human or human-originated, have searched for the language, in poetry or tales, by reasoning or edification, with which to energize others to rumination and response. Several decades ago some philosophers began to invoke the idea of nature's intrinsic or inherent value to do so.

Although "intrinsic value" is susceptible to different interpretations, it minimally denominates the value of nature *as such*, independent of its ("instrumental") usefulness to humans. Furthermore, this existence-value of nature is not placed or "projected" there by humans (or any other evaluator), but is inherent in nature itself ("objective value"). These are different claims, and some environmental ethicists would assert only the former while denying the latter (Callicott, for example). However, since both, but especially the former, have figured in movements to protect nature, they will be referred to jointly here.

Asserting nature's intrinsic value was seen as a way of articulating dissatisfaction with prevailing anthropocentric attitudes in environmentalism, which advocated preserving or conserving nature solely for its usefulness to humans. Surely, it was held, there is something valuable beyond what humans find useful in a nature vast in space and time and diversity. It was felt to be both petty and presumptuous to reduce the value of the Earth's four-and-a-half-billion-year existence to what *we* can, often literally, "get out of it" for ourselves. The contrast in *Genesis* between God's finding creation "good" and yet human's taking "dominion" over it is a striking mythic parallel to dichotomous philosophical viewpoints. Additionally, appeals to intrinsic value were advanced to justify saving from extinction species endangered by us but neither essential to "ecosystem" health nor obviously useful, even aesthetically, to people. Further motivation lies in the belief that sentientism, the equating of a creature's worth with its capacity to feel pain and pleasure, is too unecological (some say even too anthropocentric) a perspective upon which to base an *environmental* ethic which acknowledges the interdependence of the organic and inorganic components of our Earth. (Recall that photosynthesis produces atmospheric oxygen.) To still other philosophers, each organism

has a good of its own—a fulfillment, a flowering of its inherent powers, functions, and tendencies—and thus a point of view on its environment, and hence ways of being harmed (that is, physically) and indeed, some say, wronged (that is, morally injured). This compels from thoughtful people respect for its existence, which in turn entails that its welfare should at least enter into our considerations concerning how to act toward nature. Clearly, defenders of intrinsic value do not share a common position except in rejecting, or at least finding inadequate or incomplete, anthropocentric justifications of protection of our environment. In fact, some of these defenders think that the anthropocentric justifications are basically ploys with which to sell nature's preservation to politicians and public as policy—but not the root and real reason we should extend moral consideration to natural entities.

Attacks upon the invocation of intrinsic value arose immediately and continue today. Since the concept applies to *all* organisms, how can it guide us in decision-making? Wouldn't we have to value, and thus preserve, the viruses and bacteria that devastate human populations? (Remember the debate over destroying the last specimen of smallpox virus.) Can values exist independent of valuers? Even if they exist, wouldn't they be powerless to motivate us? Indeed, can we prove their existence? Isn't the idea élitist, since only the well-off are in a position to suggest sacrifice for nature's sake while many humans are hungry and homeless? Isn't the concept "mystical" and don't the arguments employed to defend it commit gross logical errors? In short, the notion has been attacked by eco-socialists, pragmatists, defenders of the interests of developing nations, epistemologists, and value theorists, among others, including those who have retracted their earlier belief in its primacy to environmental ethics.

Notwithstanding these criticisms, environmentalists should uphold nature's intrinsic value for at least three interconnected reasons. First, only belief in nature's intrinsic value can *inspire* people to the substantial sacrifices obviously required for the preservation of nature in general and of wilderness areas, such as they are, in particular. Doubtless this claim appears paradoxical. After all, anthropocentric-instrumental appeals to (collective or individual) human self-interest would seem more likely to provide the needed incentive insofar as this proves possible at all. How could the sheer value of a nature allegedly indifferent to us possibly impel conduct that would frustrate wishes for a "higher" standard of living? Finally, objectivists meta-ethical interpretations of "value" patently deprive value judgments of the motivational power that subjectivist interpretations have build into them. That is, if we interpret a value judgment as an expression of affection, interest or desire, then presumable value judgments, in fact, *function* as motivators. But if we don't, they won't. Or so it might seem.

The contention that self-interested, pragmatic (in a vulgar sense), economistic considerations are sufficient, or at least the best we have, to motivate us to avoid nature's extirpation is almost self-refuting. The damage that has been done to the natural world is enormous and the destruction presently being wreaked is an enormity. And if the government of the world's largest economy is so voter-afraid that it will not raise gasoline prices even slightly to encourage conservation and the development of alternative energy sources, little but stopgap measures can be expected. If we ground nature's preservation in purely economic considerations, only when nature is so destroyed (that is, when "resources" are so depleted) that it becomes cost-effective to shift to less damaging (i.e., more "sustainable") alternatives will nature's preservation play a decisive role in policy formulation. But by then wilderness will be just a memory. However, this argument does not prove that intrinsic value appeals will be *more* effective.

How can such appeals be effective if they would frustrate economic growth? To begin with, people have proven themselves willing to sacrifice for God or country, often at enormous cost to their own or their families' welfare. Is there reason to believe an analogous situation can be generated through outrage at our plundering of the Earth and through recognition of nature's intrinsic value?

The most poignant and pessimistic reason for believing this possible is the inverse relation between the shrinking size of wilderness areas and our growing appreciation of those remnants. Crudely expressed, we value water most when the well is dry. Slightly more optimistically, as more people live in urban areas (about half of the human population by the year 2000), the appeals of nature—silence and solitude and sublimity—are bound to increase. Only part of this appeal is self-interestedly recreational and restorative for one must appreciate nature's actual scenes and sounds, its qualities and traits, to derive such recuperative effects. This illustrates that instrumental and intrinsic value are experientially fused. For example, the master craftsman or artist must understand and cherish a particular kind of wood's specific qualities in order to use it most skillfully as material for a statue. Oddly, this Deweyan point is often employed to impugn the centrality of intrinsic value to environmental ethics. It should not be. For, again, it is only because people are capable of finding, say, God or nation of value as what they are—transcending their roles of saving us from damnation or sending us Social Security checks—that people will sacrifice for them. One hopes that, in the future, nature will take over some of their power to animate us. Is this a vain hope? Perhaps not. Two centuries of increasing appeal to the concept of human rights to define protected, because central, human interests have gradually if falteringly accustomed people to conceiving humanity as one community.

Furthermore, thanks to growing scientific literacy, similarities among all forms of life are today more appreciated. This exacerbates the difficulties of keeping feelings for people isolated and segregated from feelings for plants and animals. Indeed, this schism was never present when people lived as a community with animals and plants. Thus the need for "coherence of attitudes" combines with similarity of grounds for cherishing humans and other organisms to push us towards appreciation of larger wholes, the broadest of which is surely our planet. Furthermore, the palpable common fate of humanity on this Earth, which people everywhere are coming to understand better as human-caused damages increasingly affect their lives, will stimulate, it is reasonable to expect, not only prudential actions but more thoughtfulness about the characteristics of that nature and thus deeper intrinsic valuing of it.

Here we reach the fundamental reason environmental movements eventually must call upon nature's intrinsic value to motivate citizens to end our exploitation of nature. William James expressed it by saying that in the "recesses of feeling we catch real fact in the making." To say, as some philosophers now do, that we should preserve whales or spiders so future generations can see them too just assumes their value as *sight-worthy*. At some point, to generate *genuine* support for saving whales or spiders, the whales and spiders themselves must move us because they are alive, like us, products of evolution, like us, members of one community, like us. Appeal to the best in people—in this case, our capacity to recognize and to feel the intrinsic, not just instrumental, value of the other—is always derided as impractical. But it *can* work, just because it is true that the life, the history, and the Earth that we share render it inglorious to despoil and noble to preserve and to protect. Whether we will in fact let it work in time to save Nature is, alas, highly dubious.

Those who believe that values are "subjective" in the sense of expressions of preferences, desires, feelings, or interests would argue against the motivational power of intrinsic value. They would aver that since people value what satisfies their "subjective" aspirations or impulses, only instrumental appeals can motivate us, if anything ever can, to the sacrifices saving nature will necessitate. Voter surveys indeed confirm that the majority of people care more about environmental problems that directly affect the quality of *their* lives, i.e., their health. But this theory of value comes at the cost of an ethical absurdity: anything valued becomes valuable. This subjective side of value—undeniably part of the meaning or use of the term and its cognates—stripes it of axiological force; in ethics, "values" most usefully refers to what *ought* to be preserved, cherished or allowed to flourish. This objective sense of value, however, suffers from antithetical problems: how to establish the existence and nature of these values? At the essay's conclusion this is discussed.

The second reason to uphold nature's intrinsic worth is that only by such a campaign to save nature can we *justify* human existence or, better expressed, establish our goodness *as* a species. As Paul Taylor, the author of perhaps the most finely reasoned book of environmental philosophy, wrote, from nature's viewpoint human nonexistence would be a case of "good riddance." One premise underlying this conclusion is that *some* of the value of each organism and species resides in its contribution to the integrity of the Earth and of the evolutionary process unfolding upon it. This position might be called pluralistic holism: both individuals as individuals, *and* individuals as parts of species, of ecosystems, and of Nature in general, count ethically. This is strictly analogous to human status: for no matter how high the value we place on individuals, governments and most citizens believe themselves, especially in times of crisis, entitled to compel individuals to work, and even to risk death, for the nation as a whole. By this premise the justifiability of human collective, that is, species-existence has been compromised by our casual role in massive extinctions, so well documented as to require no elaboration here. Suffice it to remark that centuries from now *this* century will perhaps be most remembered not for its wars or technological changes or sweeping social and moral revolutions but for its massive population explosion and consequent biodiversity reductions and extirpation of indigenous cultures and their languages.

That both individuals and species have value as part of the larger world of nature should be evident from the ecologically-revealed interconnections among life forms and between life and its physical environment. Isolated existence is impossible. Evolution is a fact. Accordingly, well informed people will be concerned both for the flourishing of individuals—the natural flowering and, in some cases, pain of organisms—and for how species and individuals affect other species and individuals. The immense diversity of life is one of its glories. (Criticism of the use of such language in support of intrinsic value claims as merely rhetorical betrays a singular lack of sensitivity to what our senses evolved to allow us to appreciate, if only for survival purposes.) By this standard human behavior has for millenia been an abomination, and only grows worse. Reluctance to admit to this by now surely self-evident fact only makes insistence upon it more urgent.

Contrary to what some philosophers contend, this destruction is a collective by differential responsibility. It is true enough that many people are largely ignorant of how specifically and far-reaching their practices are contributing to nature's devastation. And it is true that others are quite knowledgeable and wholly unconcerned. And it is true that impoverished people have their economic options and life choices severely limited by military, political, and social forces almost totally beyond their power to influence. None-

theless, virtually all adults appreciate that humans are causing pain to animals and despoliation to plants and habitats, landscapes and wilderness areas *for human ends*. Everyday experiences testifies to this. Virtually all non-philosophers recognize and respond on some level to pain in animals almost as directly and immediately as they do to pain in humans. Accordingly, if people refuse to restrain consumption and reverse population growth, for example, one can only conclude that collective aspirations for the comfort of a consumer society or for a life at least superior to subsistence among the indigent overrides concern for the harm thereby done to others. Certainly there is nothing surprising in this.

Perhaps it will be said in reply that humans have as much of a "right" to flourish in their lives as members of other species, all of which survive by drawing on natural resources. But of course humans claim as their very justification in fact for using animals in medical, scientific, and cosmetic tests (when *any* reason at all is felt necessary) that they are moral agents who decide rationally whether their actions are ethical. It is hardly considered rational simply to do as (other) animals do. Additionally, the driving of vast numbers of species to extinction, the purposeful infliction of pain on the sentient to satisfy non-basic desires, and the injustice of using the vulnerable for our benefit all testify to a *deliberate* averting of our eyes from the consequences of our practices for animals and their habitats, arguable a retreat from the attitudes of our Paleolithic ancestors whose cave paintings might—one can only speculate—have been partly designed to express regret for the shedding blood in a way similar to the ancient Greeks' apparent need for assent by the sacrificial ox to his ritual slaughter.

Nobler moral traditions than those now espoused by philosophers who write like economists equate the ethical with self-sacrifice, which of course comes in degrees, for the well-being of others even without reciprocity. The good of the other *as such* is what one should aim to advance (indeed, this is Aquinas' definition of love). So here again *intrinsic* value is invoked. Applied to environmental ethics this entails that humans attempt restitution for their unjustifiable exploitation of nature by, at the very least, severely reducing their population through a one-or no-child-per-family policy, simpler lifestyles, elimination of noxious manufacturing processes, ending reliance on fossil fuels, and other restrictions on our conduct far too numerous even to list here. Such a crusade must, as shown above, be based on a conception of Nature's intrinsic value, and, ironically, this is mandated precisely by how we think of ourselves, as superior.

It will be said, of course, that such proposals are so radical and impractical that they are "absurd" or "utopian." For example, the social historian Zeldin claims that "idealism," such as that of the Green Movement, can-

not get "off the ground because it has not looked broadly enough at human aspirations in their entirety." Zeldin errs, oxymoronically, through the truth of what he propounds: that there is a universal human aspiration for one's existence to have significance (a "feeling" that famously increases with aging). Zeldin himself is the one who does not credit the breadth of human aspirations. Radicalism is not a sign of doctrinal futility, it indicates what one believes people capable of: this is compatible with futility, but hardly entails it. The door thus opens to inverting William James' "moral equivalent of war" by ending the war on nature James almost incomprehensibly proposed to initiate. Falling birth-rates almost worldwide provide evidence that people are moving in the right direction. Since death-rates are declining even faster, however, a truly tragic situation has developed, in which the realization of higher survival rates motivates the ethically-mandated conduct but without the desired benefits for the natural world.

The third reason that the notion of nature's inherent value is crucial to a satisfactory environmental movement is that only acknowledging nature's intrinsic value *explains* why humanity should largely subordinate its interests to nature's. As indicated, some philosophers have sought an answer to this question by what might be labeled the evasion of asserting an obligation on the part of each generation to leave future people an Earth at least no worse in its biological richness and natural resources than the one inherited from the past. This is an evasion because an *environmental* ethic must be directed first and foremost to protecting the Earth's integrity and its evolutionary process. If nature's value were wholly instrumental to ours (even when the "ours" refers to future generations of people), collective species-prudence (an anomalous mean between egoism and altruism) would become our highest value, a morally inadequate state of affairs, since, as discussed, the dominant strand of Western morality commends and glorifies self-sacrifice for the greater good, even in purely human ethics.

A pragmatic defense of why we should subordinate human to natural well-being to the extent of protecting natural species even at the cost of human lives has been advanced by Holmes Rolston III. His argument is that the extinction of animal species and the pain thus caused to individual animals by utilizing wilderness for so-called sustainable development in present world conditions does not benefit humanity either in the long or very short term. Humanity will *still* be required to take steps to reduce its population even if we converted every tropical rain forest to grazing land for future cheeseburgers. Temporary, marginal gains to human welfare do not justify the finality of extinction, biodiversity reduction, possibly irreversible alterations to the Earth's climate, and so forth. Although convincing, this argument still does not illuminate or establish the reality of nature's intrinsic value. Many philoso-

phers believe either that this intrinsic value can never, in fact, be established or that it need not be.

Perhaps this difficulty is because, as Mill famously wrote, proof of "ultimate principles" is a very different kind of task than proof built upon them. On what could one establish this value? The right procedure is to reverse the question. Why would a (non-suicidal) living thing wonder skeptically about life's value? There is a parallel here to the theodicy problem: why would a perfectly good and all-powerful god allow evil to exist? Even to attempt to answer this question is to admit that possibly evil is justifiable—an appalling premise for ratiocination. Even to doubt the value of the Earth—the only known planet with life—is to adopt a standpoint of complete neutrality about whether the existence of sky, rock, wind, and life is a better state of affairs than their complete non-existence. Could anyone believe that? *What* in the experience of the surrounding life and languages of nature could cause such a standpoint? Surely the answer is entombment in a mass-produced world of fungible commodities from which interchange with life—and with death—has been minimized. It is precisely because native cultures live at the opposite pole to our society of maximized technology and "virtual reality" that their accelerating disappearance will be among the most tragic bequests of our century to the future. In their world view, the standpoint of demanding a justification for the claim of nature's intrinsic value could never arise, because nature is not conceptualized as an entity separate from humanity. Thus, no "proof" of Earth's intrinsic value can be given; its value must be assumed, or presupposed, by anyone challenging its existence in the name of morality in the sense of concern with the conduct, condition and fate of humanity. Only in science fiction—i.e., science with a happy ending, as Oscar Wilde would put it—can humanity flourish in a wholly fabricated environment that reflects our alleged right to use nature simply as our set of resources.

We realize nature's intrinsic value when we comprehend that in the Jamesian strata of "natural piety" where fact is made our species must live as part of the community of land and life to which Leopold memorably referred in his *A Sand County Almanac*. If this seems like faith or fantasy from our urbanized, i.e., civilized, perspective, it is faith indeed with fact behind it: all the threads of evolutionary history and of nature's complexity that produced and still sustain humanity, the being that asserts simultaneously both its status of "superior" over nature (because moral) as well as the right to obliterate nature for the mundane goals and goods of a ceaselessly multiplying population. This contradiction can be cut only in two ways. We can continue as we are doing now, that is, proving our superiority over nature by transforming our

environment into something that will be, indeed, of no value at all. Or, we can reconnect with nature's intrinsic value. This will require from us very different choices. Only in the latter way, however, could it truly be said that, in Hölderlin's words, "full of merit and yet poetically, dwells Man on this earth."

Works Cited

Aldred, Jonathan. "Existence Value, Moral Commitments and In-Kind Valuation," in John Foster, ed., *Valuing Nature?* London and New York: Routledge, 1997.

Attfield, Robin. "The Good of Trees," *Value Inquiry*, Vol. 15 (1981): 35-54.

Baxter, William F. "People or Penguins," in William H. Shaw, ed., *Social and Personal Ethics*, 3rd ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1999.

Brandt, Richard B. "Science as a Basis for Moral Theory," in Sinnot-Armstrong and Timmons, *Moral Knowledge?*

Brennan, Andrew. "Poverty, Puritanism and Environmental Conflict," *Environmental Values*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (August 1998).

Burkert, Walter. *Homo Necans*. tr. Peter Bing. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983.

Callicott, J. Baird. "On the Instrinsic Value of Nonhuman Species," in Callicot, *In Defense of the Land Ethic*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989.

Dodds, E.R. *The Greeks and the Irrational*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963.

Eldredge, Niles. *Life in the Balance*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998.

Elliot, Robert. "Intrinsic Value, Environmental Obligation and Naturalness," in *The Intrinsic Value of Nature, The Monist*, Vol. 75, No. 2 (April 1992).

Gaus, Gerald F. *Value and Justification: The Foundations of Liberal Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Godfrey-Smith, William. "The Value of Wilderness," in James E. White, ed., *Contemporary Moral Problems*, 5th ed. St. Paul: West Publishing Co., 1997.

Guha, Ramachandra. "Radical Environmentalism and Wilderness Preservation: A Third World Critique," *Environmental Ethics*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Spring 1989): 71-83.

Hickman, Larry A. "Nature as Culture: John Dewey's Pragmatic Naturalism," in Andrew Light and Eric Katz, eds., *Environmental Pragmatism*. London and New York: Routledge, 1996.

Holderlin's "Empedocles on Etna," by Martin Heidegger in "Holderlin and the Essence of Poetry," tr. Douglas Scott in Heidegger, *Existence and Being*. introduction by Werner Brock. Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1965.

Ignatieff, Michael. *The Needs of Strangers*. New York: Viking Press, 1984.

Jackson, Kenneth T. "Cities," in Richard Bulliet, ed., *The Columbia History of the 20th Century*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.

Johnson, Lawrence E. *A Morally Deep World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Katz, Eric. *Nature as Subject*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997.

Lee, Keekok. "The Source and Locus of Intrinsic Value," *Environmental Ethics*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Fall 1996).

Light, Andrew and Katz, Eric, eds. *Environmental Pragmatism*. London and New York: Routledge, 1996.

McGinn, Robert E. "Technology, Demography, and the Anachronism of Traditional Rights," in Morton Winston and Ralph Edelback, eds., *Society, Ethics, and Technology*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1999.

Midgley, Mary. *Animals and Why They Matter*. Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1983.

Norton, Bryan G. *Toward Unity Among Environmentalists*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

O'Neill, John. "Varieties of Intrinsic Values," in *The Monist*, Vol. 75, No. 2 (April 1992): 119-37.

Norton, Bryan G. "Why I Am Not a Nonanthropocentrist: Callicott and the Failure of Monistic Inherentism," *Environmental Ethics*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (Winter 1995): 341-58.

Regan, Tom. "The Nature and Possibility of an Environmental Ethic," in G. Lee Bowie, Kathleen M. Higgins, and Meredith W. Michaels, eds., *Thirteen Questions in Ethics and Social Philosophy*. New York: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1998.

Rollin, Bernard E. "Environmental Ethics and International Justice," in Steven Luper and Curtis Brown, eds., *The Moral Life*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1999.

Rolston, Holmes, III. "Feeding People Versus Saving Nature?" in Hugh LaFallette, ed., *Ethics in Practice: An Anthology*. New York: Blackwel Publishers, 1997.

Roxbee, Jeremy Cox. "The Relations Between Preservation and Value, " in John Foster, ed., *Valuing Nature?* London and New York: Routledge, 1997.

Russow, Lily-Marlene, "Why do Species Matter?" in Tom Regan and Peter Singer, eds., *Animal Rights and Human Obligations*, 2nd ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1989.

Soper, Kate. *What is Nature?* Cambridge: Blackwell, 1995. Taylor, Paul W. *Respect for Nature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986.

White, Lynn, Jr. "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," *Science*, Vol. 155 (March 10, 1967).

Teaching English Composition on the Internet: Getting Used to New Shoes

Lawrence Souder
Community College of Philadelphia

Like many experienced composition teachers, I've reached a point where entering the classroom is like putting on an old pair of shoes: the feeling is comfortable if a little worn. Sometimes I hardly notice where I'm going because there's nothing new to rub against. That familiarity vanished when I agreed to teach a section of English composition at the Community College of Philadelphia (CCP) in the Spring of 1998. This course was advertised to be taught entirely through e-mail and the World Wide Web. Although this experience upset my complacency and forced me to grapple personally with the issues that arise fronnnnm the confluence of education and technology, my responses may also be instructive for others who are entertaining such an enterprise. I preface my report here with two qualifications: (1) the course was one of the first attempts at CCP to teach composition over the Internet, so my experience may be idiosyncratic, and (2) the class hardly represented an adequate sample since by end of the course the population was down to nine students. What I offer here, then, is mostly a list of questions and hypotheses about teaching composition over the Internet rather than any assessments or conclusions. Although none of these questions ever appeared in isolation in practice, I'll try to address them as they fall into four broad categories—technical, pedagogical, teacher-centered, and student-centered.

The highly technological character of an Internet-based course demands, a revision of what the term literacy means. An essential part of general literacy must now be computer literacy. In this sense education via the Internet is qualitatively different from education in the traditional classroom. An Internet student, or teacher, is not someone with a sophisticated typewriter at one hand and a telephone at the other. Using a networked computer requires both abstract understanding of network structure and practical knowledge of a multi-layered discipline with its own syntax and semantics. Moreover, as with any discipline it must be learned and practiced by both students and teachers.

In this regard the participants in the Internet composition represented a wide range of abilities. I am a computer professional with in-depth, technical knowledge that exceeds anything even the most advanced user requires. As a consequence I often had to stifle my impatience when a student handed in papers that obviously hadn't been run through a spell-check. I was more

sympathetic with students who stumbled over more advanced operations like uploading documents to the web site. However, both of these technical skills, and a host of others, were essential for even entering this course. For this reason my students were fortunate to have access to my technical resources. I could usually talk them through any technical problem. However, I suspect that future teachers of this course may not have the same background.

The participants in the Internet course also brought with them a diverse set of software and service providers, which can severely complicate the daily conduct of the course. Even something as fundamental as differences in students' word processing software complicated the grading of papers, since a Word '97 file, for example, is not readable by a Word '95 program. Differences in Internet service providers were also problematic. Community College of Philadelphia is its own Internet server, but this course was offered through the Internet server at the local public television station, WHYY, and most students accessed course resources by way of third-party providers like AOL. One particular consequence of this assortment of technology was that the chat software at WHYY does not work through AOL unless the subscriber has Windows '95 or later.

These technological issues are not particularly critical since they all have technological fixes; given enough time, effort, and money, problems with software incompatibility and user competence can be solved. The pedagogical issues involved with the virtual classroom, however, are of a different sort: when it comes to actually using technology to teach students, we cannot simply add computers and simmer. My sense is that Internet courses will present challenges to traditional perspectives and value systems that no amount of time or money will address. If the migration of traditional college courses to the Internet is inevitable, then traditional college teachers, like myself, will be forced to answer some fundamental questions about that it means to be a student, what it means to be in a classroom, and what it means to be a teacher.

One challenge that Internet courses pose to students is that they require a degree of self-motivation that need not exist in traditional students. The lack of face-to-face cues that teachers in the traditional classroom may take for granted are missing in the virtual classroom. I never knew who was really paying attention to my lectures, which were posted weekly to the web site, or to my comments in the 8:00 p.m. Monday night chat room, which, for all I know, might have been competing with the dialogues on *The Cosby Show* or *Suddenly Susan*. So I had to assume that my students were listening, but if they weren't, I had no way of externally motivating them. Also, since I didn't have access to puzzled facial expressions, I depended on their internal motivation to ask questions and to clarify their understanding. When my own anxiety over their motivation became too great during the course, I

called an ad hoc on-campus mid-term meeting of the class to get a better sense of their affect.

The greater challenge Internet courses pose, however, is to teachers. What it means to be a teacher is now being questioned as more courses migrate to the virtual classroom. The authority and integrity of the traditional classroom teacher will probably no longer be givens. The most palpable example of this is the archival nature of Internet courses: everything said by student and teacher alike in the virtual classroom is archived or achievable. All of my lectures (which included the inevitable typos) are posted to a semi-public bulletin board. All of my students' drafts and final papers along with my annotations are archived both in my computer and theirs. Even our spontaneous weekly Monday night dialogue (which, again, includes the inevitable spelling and mechanical lapses) can be easily cut-and-paste by anyone who participates in the chat room. This aquarium-like visibility made me feel vulnerable in the virtual classroom, since now my writing is as exposed as my students'. In general, I think this visibility might tend to level the playing field between student and teacher—not a particularly comforting prospect for someone who once rested easily in a teacher-centered classroom.

Another challenge the Internet poses is to the traditional authority of the teacher as it plays out in the interactions between student and teacher. The Internet tends to increase the students' access to the instructor. I found that the asynchronous nature of communication in the virtual classroom allowed the students to interact with me as often and at any time they wished. In this regard the traditional boundary between teachers' work time and their non-work time might be blurred. Although I could easily have postponed answering students' emailed questions or requests, I usually responded to them whether I had logged-on for class purposes or not.

Having fixated on the worrisome aspects of teaching composition on the Internet, let me try to achieve balance with some hopeful speculations. Recent research and scholarship in composition have tried to explore the extent to which computers will affect the teaching of literacy. Many have approached this area with a shopping list of needs, which include hopes of improving students' sensitivity to audience, of providing settings to write collaboratively, and of redressing historical imbalances in literacy levels inherent in cultural, economic, racial, and gender differences. I think I've seen signs that Internet courses can offer a unique environment that effectively addresses these needs.

The issue of sensitivity to audience seems central to composition generally. What Linda Flower and John Hayes hold up as the reader-centered text now seems the goal in composition. There are two aspects of the virtual classroom that I think are uniquely responsive to this goal. My Internet stu-

dents seemed to respond eagerly to the peer-review process that was part of the course activities in a way that my students in the traditional classroom had not. The facile exchange of texts made possible by e-mail encouraged students to enter into a dialogue that centered on reading and reacting to the writing of others. Though this process was not under my complete control and oversight, students noticed and marveled at how their writing could affect readers other than an English teacher and how the reactions of those other readers mattered to their efforts to craft an intelligible message.

Another important issue in current composition pedagogy seems to be collaborative writing. At the heart of this kind of activity is what Stanley Fish called the "interpretive community," a group of readers who bring various, perhaps conflicting, values and assumptions to the reading process. On this count technology may have taken a bad rap. The image of the isolating and dehumanizing computer has led us to think that no legitimate kind of community would be possible on the Internet. Yet, my Internet students seemed to have already established a kind of *esprit de corps*. One week I was out of town for a conference and job interviews, and I asked them to carry on the Monday evening chat without me. One student archived and e-mailed to me that evening's discussion, which revealed a surprising sense of community after only three weeks of classes. Not only does this technology not discourage community formation, but it also offers unique features for collaborative projects. The chat software provided by WHYY allowed all participants to access other parts of the course web site at the same time that we conducted our discussions in the chat room. This feature enabled us to view several student texts, for example, and discuss them.

A third issue in current composition studies relates to redressing imbalances in literacy and uneven access to technology along social, racial, and gender lines. Here the forecasts of someone like Evelyn Fox Keller as expressed in her *Reflections on Gender and Science* may show signs of improving. My Internet class started out with 11 women and three men. At the mid-term I had nine active students: eight women and one man. Of the eight women four were African-American and one was an ESL student from Hungary. Though at least two of my students dropped out for lack of technological competence and resources, I think that computers and the Internet are now almost as accessible as conventional mass media, and as such they can become the tools for evening out social, racial, and gender inequities.

Having spoken in such utopian terms, however, let me conclude with some questions that imply caveats about teaching composition on the Internet in general and about my own commitment to this project in particular:

1. Can I put aside my traditional authority and autonomy as an instructor whenever I enter the virtual classroom?
2. Can I get my students to assume more responsibility for their own motivation in the learning process (as the virtual classroom requires) and to give up the notion of the teacher as being *in loco parentis*?
3. Can I get my colleagues to revise their concepts of student, teacher, classroom, and literacy to reflect the changes brought about by the virtual classroom?
4. Can I get my school to set up and maintain a virtual classroom where working environments have been sufficiently standardized and students and teachers are already technologically prepared so that their interaction is as seamless as it is in the traditional classroom?

Women's Growth in Connection: Yezierska, Cather, and Marshall

Hedda Marcus
Nassau Community College

I've been teaching a course on the Modern American novel for many years. Originally I based my course on the premises of American modernism which I'd learned as an undergraduate and graduate student in English during the sixties and seventies. Books by Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Faulkner, and Thomas Wolfe formed the core of these courses, writers whose emphasis on exile and alienation have been seen as the universal themes of the century. But over the years, the more I read and taught the works of women, the less I saw the alienation, cultural malaise, nihilism, and insistence that "you can't go home again" which had defined modernism as I'd learned about it. My work in the field of women's studies helped me see that my observation was worth attention. The cultural narratives which we see as *true* influence what is valued in our lives and behaviors. The books we teach both reflect and construct the ways we live and the ways we participate in our culture.

At the same time I was making these observations, I discovered the work of The Stone Center, the part of The Wellesley Center for Research on Women which focuses on psychology. Working under the premise that the traditional model of healthy emotional growth was based on the lives of boys rather than girls, the psychologists at The Stone Center have revisited theories of development. Jean Baker Miller's groundbreaking 1976 book, *Toward a New Psychology of Women*, defined healthy female development as "growth-in-connection" whereas modern psychology had previously emphasized "separation and individuation." The Stone Center research recognizes every individual's need to become a unique self, but their theory also recognizes that the closer and more continuous connections to their origins which women often demonstrate can be a source of rich experience, strength, and joy, which does not necessarily preclude self-determination and full development. Both aspects of development—separateness and connectedness—have their problems and pitfalls, but this work validates a quality in human nature which had previously been denigrated by psychology and used as a way of seeing women as less-than-capable. In fact, according to The Stone Center's Janet Surrey, "The notion of self-in-relation involves an important shift in emphasis from separation to relationship as the basis for self-experience and development. Further, relationship is seen as the basic goal of development; . . . The self-in-relation model assumes that other aspects of self (e.g. creativity, autonomy, assertion) develop within this primary context" (52). This description parallels what I've been seeing in modern and contemporary

American women's writing: women characters with a need and a gift for maintaining ties to home while developing as individuals. This theoretical model of "self-in-relation" instead of simply "the development of self," seems to me to be reflected particularly strongly in the developmental journeys of characters in books about immigrant women. In these novels, ties to the home culture embody the social and emotional connectedness which feminist psychologists are describing.

Finally, Peggy McIntosh's "phase theory" of curriculum transformation gives my inquiry a clear purpose. McIntosh's goal is for a curriculum which truly reflects the real wealth of ideas and values which are part of our culture. Her "[p]hase Four teaching and inquiry dares to put what was neglected or marginal at the center, to see what new insight or theory can be developed from hitherto excluded or overlooked sources whose absence helped to determine the shape of each field" (Working Papers #124). Phase Five, the final phase, radically reenvisions not only our curricula but our culture as it imagines a truly inclusive, non-hierarchical approach to knowledge and living.

So this paper, which we might call a phase four inquiry, is a small part of ongoing research which puts previously marginalized voices at the center to see how they change our received knowledge and assumptions about our culture. Looking at three novels about the journeys of immigrant women towards self-definition, I will examine the strategies women characters (and their women creators) use to incorporate "growth-in-connection." I'll seek to find out whether women characters end up looking different from the male heroes whose stories we have thus far seen as the models of development. Can we find a "self-in-relation" model of growth in these novels? Using books by women, do we begin to redefine the main themes in the American novel?

Anzia Yezierska's 1925 novel *Bread Givers* is quickly becoming a much-loved novel in courses on women writers but does not appear on the typical American novel syllabus at this point in time. Perhaps this absence is because it is a novel written in the distinct voice of a recent Jewish woman immigrant whose style reflects her "greenness" and lack of experience with English and the American culture. Yezierska, though an immigrant herself, was nevertheless sufficiently educated in English at the time she wrote this novel to have written it in a more sophisticated style. Her choice of first person narration in the voice of the young, female, recent immigrant was a shrewd one. This diction itself, which becomes slightly more sophisticated as the book goes on but never loses its Yiddish-English flavor, reflects the growth-in-connection motif of the novel since the writer/narrator never abandons the sound of her original voice. While *Bread Givers* dramatizes the struggle of the young Sara Smolinsky to free herself of the patriarchal constraints which would severely limit her development, it also brings to life the pain which the

young woman experiences in separating herself from her home and family and her ultimate resistance to doing this entirely. In spite of her father's dominance and cruelty, the poverty which she desperately wishes to escape and the crass materialism of the world which she knows she must leave behind as she embraces self-defined values, and in spite of her deep satisfaction as she becomes the educated woman she wants to be, the cost of separation is very great. In the end, she finds that "you must go home again."

Most of the novel describes Sara's quest for the kind of separation from her origins which we've come to expect as inevitable in the American story. Only by physically leaving her family entirely and finding a way to barely feed herself does she make possible an escape from the oppression endured by her mother and sisters. But Yezierska weaves into her determined quest for freedom a pull back to her origins, a memory of what was good there. A combination of hunger, a familiar sensation, and loneliness make her journey excruciating: "I hated by stomach. It was like some clawing wild animal in me that I had to stop to feed always . . . I didn't have to share (my little bit of oatmeal) with anyone . . . That's what made it so hateful. A longing came over me for Hester Street. Even in our worst poverty we sat around a table together, like people" (173). Though going off alone is necessary for her development, she yearns for the connection she has known.

When Sara finds her way to an upstate college, she initially envies the easy privilege of the well-to-do American students she encounters. Feeling inadequate and unrefined in this setting, she does everything she can to succeed on purely intellectual grounds, but it is only when she connects the material she's learning with her own earlier life that she is really empowered to learn:

> I flung myself into the . . . work with a fierce determination to wring the last drop of knowledge from each course. At first, psychology was like Greek to me. So many words. 'Apperception,' 'reflex arc,' 'inhibitions.' What had all that fancy book language to do with the real plain every day?
> Then one day, Mr. Edelman said to the class, 'Give an example from your own experience showing how anger or any strong emotion interferes with you thinking.'
> Suddenly it dawned on me. I jumped to my feet with excitement. I told him about Zalmon the fish-peddler. Once I saw him got so mad at a woman for wanting to bargain down a penny on a pound of fish that in his anger he threw a dollar's worth of change at her. In a flash, so many sleeping things in my life woke up in me. (222)

Suddenly she knows "what countless riches lay buried under the ground of those early years that I had thought so black, so barren, so thwarted with want" (221). Even at the height of her potential assimilation, she recognizes the depth and identity which her origins have given her.

In the last chapter of the novel, Sara has successfully escaped the limited role which her European Jewish background had prescribed for her, and she has become a teacher. She has no doubts that she had to leave home to create herself as an educated person. But she says, "My joy hurt like guilt" (281).

Perhaps the greatest departure from the novels of men's lives is Sara's return, after establishing herself as a teacher, to care for her aging and ailing father, the tyrant whom she originally so needed to escape. In doing so, she honors her mother's request and thereby her mother's life of dedication to her husband and family. When she discovers her father's ill-health, she says, "How could I have hated him and tried to blot him out of my life? Can I hate my arm, my hand that is part of me? Can a tree hate the roots from which it sprang? Deeper than love, deeper than pity, is the oneness of the flesh that's in him and in me" (286). She is buffered from her father's tyrannical presence by her new husband's willingness to help her, but her decision to care for him will not be unproblematic. Ailing and aged though he is, she says, "I almost hated him again as I felt his tyranny—the tyranny with which he tried to crush me as a child. Then suddenly the pathos of the lonely old man pierced me. In a world where all is changed, he alone remained unchanged—as tragically isolate as the rocks. All that he had left was his fanatical adherence to his traditions. It was within my power to keep lighted the flickering candle of his life for him. could I deny him this poor service?" (296). Although she has become an educated woman, a self-sustaining professional, she chooses, not without anxiety or ambivalence, but chooses nevertheless, to be a vehicle for tradition, to keep the candles of her origins lit, and to do it without losing who she is. Some readers may see the novel's ending as only a limited liberation for Sara, but it seems to me that Yezierska is acknowledging women's "ethic of care and responsibility," as Carol Gilligan has called it, and has made it an essential aspect of a "heroic" life.

A novel which takes place, on the Nebraska prairie, far from Sara's Smolinsky's Manhattan, Willa Cather's *My Antonia* has certainly been a long-loved novel, but to my knowledge is rarely taught as part of a canon of works which defines modern American consciousness. Though the 1934 novel is narrated by a male voice, a female growth-in-connection sensibility defines the book. Jim Burden, a childhood friend of the Bohemian immigrant Antonia Shimerda, tells the story of Antonia's life, her impact on him, and the value of carrying the past into the present. The reader admires Antonia's extraordinary strength and her ability to create a satisfying life out of extreme poverty.

But the joy which the reader takes in Antonia's story seems to me to come out of a particular richness which Cather has written into her character. It is Antonia's quality of keeping her origins alive, of maintaining the past within a vital present, which gives the reader a sense of the profound wholeness which life can offer. This quality also seems to be a crucial part of the strength which carries Antonia through the enormous hardships of poverty and loss, and the burdens of physical labor which she endures in America. Many years after Antonia has come to America, when she and Jim are adults, she says to him, ". . . if I was put down [in the place where I was born] in the middle of the night, I could find my way all over that little town; and along the river to the next town, where my grandmother lived. My feet remember all the little paths through the woods, and where the big roots stick out to trip you. I ain't never forgot my own country" (178).

Antonia's continuous connection with the old country, her insistence on keeping the memory of her father vividly alive, her resolve to do anything and everything she needs to do to help her family, even if it means forgoing education and taking on the exhausting farm work usually reserved for men, and her intense connection to the earth all enable her to survive life on the prairie. But this is more than a life of survival, as Jim Bruden describes it to us. While others of her generation, her friends Lena and Tiny, go off to become entrepreneurs in one way or another, trying to mine the American economic dream, Antonia leaves the prairie only briefly, and returns to remain close to the land, raising a family which demonstrates "a kind of physical harmony," (256) and she teaches her children to speak "to each other in their rich old language [Bohemian]" (256). If her life on the land with many children and a husband who depends on her seems hard, the novel celebrates it as intensely satisfying, even larger-than-life.

At the end of the book, Antonia's life serves as a reminder to Jim of what he has neglected in himself as he has become a successful New York City lawyer for the railroad: "I had the sense of coming home to myself, and of having found out what a little circle man's experience is" (272). For narrator Jim Burden, Antonia's life stands as a reminder, to one who has lost and abandoned his roots, of the value of keeping the past alive: "Antonia had always been one to leave images in the mind that did not fade—that grew stronger with time. . . . She lent herself to immemorial human attitudes which we recognize by instinct as universal and true . . . All the strong things of her heart came out in her body, that had been so tireless in serving generous emotions . . . She was a rich mine of life, like the founders of early races" (258-9). Jim Burden, who has had a successful and productive life but not an emotionally happy one, rediscovers his own past through telling Antonia's story. As an immigrant who grows without forfeiting her connections, her

character shines as a glorious alternative to the individualistic twentieth century model of success which so many writers have couched in alienation and isolation.

Forfeiting and reclaiming origins is the primary and overt theme of Paule Marshall's contemporary *Praisesong for the Widow* (1984), a less well-known novel than either of the others, but one which seems to me a neglected treasure. A novel about immigration from an African-American perspective, *Praisesong* presents the late-middle age of a woman for whom assimilation has been the only bridge out of an oppressive ghetto experience. The book, tells the tale of a woman once happily grounded in her ethnic experience, who is separated from it forcibly in order to succeed in the mainstream culture, who finally recognizes her deep loss, and returns physically and spiritually to her place of origin.

For Avey Johnson and her husband Jay, African-Americans via the Caribbean, economic survival in the United States has meant a denial of their physical and spiritual essences and an intensely focused imitation of white bourgeois existence, including the unquestioning pursuit of the American economic and social dream. In their early life together, in spite of economic hardship, the couple seems to be deeply connected to their culture, especially through music: "Some days called for the blues. Those evenings coming in he didn't even stop to take off his coat and hat before going to the closet in their bedroom where at the back of the top shelf he kept the old blues records in an album that was almost falling apart . . . In his hands the worn-out album with its many leaves became a sacred object, and each record an icon . . . The Jay who emerged from the music of an evening, the self that would never been seen at the store, was open, witty, playful, even outrageous at times . . . and passionate . . ." (94-95). When he forgets the restorative power of jazz and the blues, Jay becomes Jerome Johnson, SPA, and Avey becomes a "lady" because being a woman would cost too much. Marshall's narrator describes the moment in which Avey's husband made an irrevocable decision to "make it," a decision which required him to abandon what Amiri Baraka calls, ". . . life from the ancestors, and knowledge, and the strong nigger feeling . . . ."

Years later, after achieving an upper-middle class life and after the death of Jerome, Avey is exercising her status as "lady" by going on a cruise to the Caribbean with two women friends. When she finds herself gagging on the cloying excesses of food and alienated by the luxuriousness and formality of the ship, she is also haunted by dreams of her great-aunt Cuney whose memory she has tried to bury. Her aunt had brought Avey in her girlhood to Ibo Landing in the Carolinas and told her the story of the Ibos, whom Cuney said "was my peoples my gran said could see in more ways than one. The kind can tell 'bout things happened long before they was born and things to come long after they's dead" (37-38), who walked back across the water to

Africa, chains and all, singing, because they would not be enslaved. This heritage of resistance Avey has pushed out of her memory until it insists itself into her dreams.

As all of her years of assimilation culminated in revulsion on that cruise ship, Avey is able to reconnect with the priceless understanding her aunt had offered her during her childhood. Through memory, dream, and journey, Avey ultimately returns to freedom and nation. But before she is able to come back to the primary African knowledge which will revivify her, she must peel off the girdled, ensembled, manicured and white-gloved layers of the "lady" she has become in order to assimilate, and she must allow herself to mourn all that she and Jay lost when they gave up what she calls "being cullud" (136).

Impelled for the first time in a long time by inarticulate but powerful yearning rather than by reason and economic practicality, Avey abandons her traveling companions and gets off the ship at Grenada, finding herself inexorably pulled deeper into the Caribbean towards a small island. She is taken there under the watchful care of Lebert Joseph and his daughter becomes the matter-of-factly loving midwife to her rebirth.

As the novel reaches its conclusion, Avey comes back to her own ancient self as she finds herself dancing the dance of her people, the "Cariacou tramp," or Ring Shout: "Now suddenly, as if she were that girl again, with her entire life yet to live, she felt the treads streaming out from the old people . . . she began to dance then. Just as her feet of her own accord had discovered the old steps, her hips under the linen shirtdress slowly began to weave from side to side on their own, stiffly at first and then in a smooth wide arc as her body responded more deeply to the music . . . All of her moving suddenly with a vigor and passion she hadn't felt in years, and with something of the stylishiness and sass she had once been known for . . . Yet for all the sudden unleashing of her body she was being careful to observe the old rule: Not once did the soles of her feet leave the ground" (250). When her feet do leave the Caribbean, she joins her daughter in her activist work with urban children and understands for the first time the burgeoning Black identity movement in the United States. Avey's return to her place of origin is a return to "her old parents" as Lebert Joseph puts it, and her journey ends in a connectedness which is cultural and psychological at once. Returning to work with her daughter in the community completes the circle. All of the books I've discussed suggest a trajectory of human development which differs from the traditional male hero's journey, with a self-in-relation model being posited as a valuable way of growing.

Each of these books is about highly developed women characters with purposeful work who have not sacrificed their attachments to their ori-

gins. Empathic ties to previous generations ground these women characters in history and create meaning in their lives. As beings-in-relation they show none of the alienation or nihilism of Hemingway's characters or Fitzgerald's. I hope that my paper suggests that as writing by women is woven into the canon and given co-equal status with the work of men, we will begin to reformulate our literacy notions of universal experience, and in the case of the modern American novel, of what life in the twentieth century has been like and what it has meant to be American in this time period

Works Cited

Cather, Willa. *My Antonia.* NY: vintage Classics, 1994.

McIntosh, Peggy. *Interactive Phases of Curricular Re-vision: A Feminist Perspective.* Working Paper #124, Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, Wellesley MA., 1983.

Marshall, Paule. *Praisesong for the Widow.* NY: Plume, 1983.

Miller, Jean Baker, M.D. *Toward a New Psychology of Women*, second edition. MA: Beacon Press, 1986..

Surrey, Janet. ""The Self-in-Relation': A Theory of Women's Development," in *Women's Growth in Connection: Writings from the Stone Center.* NY: Guilford Press, 1991.

Yezierska, Anzia. *Bread Givers.* NY: Persea Books, 1975.

Gender and African Diaspora Issues in Film

Robert L. Giron
Montgomery College-Takoma Park

Engaging students in social issues that are touched on in literature can be a challenge, especially when students do not have similar cultural backgrounds. I use film as a means for getting students to experience a slice of life from a character's journey into the highway gridlock of cultural and political crossroads. Film will no doubt continue to give us numerous interpretations of this dynamic highway that crosses roads. However, because film has the added magical power to seduce the viewer into a realm of escapism, one is able to buy into "that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith" as Coleridge so eloquently stated in his 1817 text *Biographia Literaria.*

How then can one help students think about gender and cultural issues? Today, issues of inequality due to gender and race are still very much with us. In Afghanistan the Taliban has taken over the country and has forced women to become completely subservient to men, not only in deed but also in dress. On October 12, 1998, Matthew Shepard, twenty-one, who lived an openly gay life in Laramie, Wyoming, died from being beaten to death simply because of who he was. Another horrific incident is the murder of the black man in Jasper, Texas. I need not list a litany of examples to illustrate wrongs done to others that go back to the beginning of civilization; however, if we as educators do not remember the past then as the Spanish philosopher George Santayana said we "are condemned to repeat it." Consequently the notion that teaching has no ethical framework is one I cannot espouse. Quite the contrary, the very incorporation of gender and the African Diaspora into the curriculum forces one to examine the needlework of our cultural fabric. My examination of such issues began in 1988 as a fellow in a college FIPSE (Fund for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education) grant to incorporate women and minorities into the curriculum and most recently as a Fellow in a Montgomery College partnership with the Smithsonian Institution on the African Diaspora. With this as a foundation, I ventured on my own journey to move students onto the path of our cultural and political crossroads.

A powerful and still relevant film, the 1953 docudrama *Salt of the Earth* speaks to the issue of gender equality. Michael Wilson, the screenwriter, tells a convincing story of the true-to-life struggle for better working conditions in mining communities in New Mexico. Director Herbert Biberman effectively uses the black and white medium to paint a dismal picture of the struggle between the mostly Mexican-American workers and the mostly

Anglo-American owners. But this film goes a step further. The mining company secures a court injunction against picketing by the male workers. After weeks of striking, the workers see no just reward. In fact, the miners appear to buckle in their boots at the apparent legal blow, but a miner's wife speaks up at the union meeting and states that there is no law against the wives picketing . Now the husbands are the ones who are defensive. One union member clarifies that the women are not members of the union and therefore should not speak at the gathering. Chaos is about to ensue until a gentleman suggests that the men adjourn the union meeting and open a community discussion. Within the framework of a community, the men, who appear to be all but defeated by the mining company, give in to the wives' idea to picket for them while the men take care of the children at home and do household chores.

It is interesting that the film *Salt of the Earth* was boycotted by theatres when it was released in 1954 and not just because of its pro-labor tone in an anti-union decade. Who would tolerate economic equality for Mexican-American who were perceived as less than American? Never mind that some of their families have been in the Southwest since 1598 (Sonnichsen 16-17), twenty-two years before those who came on the Mayflower settled in the Northeast. For as firm critic Robert Kolker points out, a form of segregation existed even in film. ". . . [I]n most films, people of color either did not exist or were treated as servants" (92). And with regard to women, who would tolerate sexual equality for women before the feminist movement? When students see this film they are shocked at the boldest of the *ciména vérité* that bites with truth. For even today some of these very issues are still being fought in our society.

The awesome power of the screen as so magically handled in the award-winning 1988 Italian film *Cinema Paradiso* spoke to another character now burned into our memories by the stunning performance of William Hurt in *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, based on the novel by the same title by Manuel Puig. Luis Molina is the main character who escapes into American films to live his magical life of transgenderism. Film critic Bruce Kawin characterized this film as "a wonderful exploration of the paradox of escapism" (61). As viewers we see how the glamorous lifestyles of the Hollywood era divas speak to Molina in a way that only he can understand. In a prison cell, Molina seduces anti-government resistant Valentin Arregui with his captivating recounts of the Spider Woman, a composite character of both Molina's imagination and his love for Hollywood divas. In *Kiss of the Spider Woman* the Nazi theme, the story within the story, has a double entendre. Both Molina and Valentin are fighting the system: Molina wants to be free sexually and Valentin wants to be politically. Eventually Molina falls in love with Valentin, coincidentally named after St. Valentine; however, both characters are con-

fused by the relationship that ensues. Molina who wants to display kindness and warmth states: "Why do only women get to be sensitive?" Valentin replies: "You're too kind. I can't be."

The introduction of the sensitive man, however, did not begin with Molina. In the 1954 film *The Wild One*, Marlon Brando plays a sensitive biker who cries, although alone. In the era of women beginning to gain control, such a display of sensitivity was considered subversive enough that in England *The Wild One* was banned as film critic Robert Kolker states not so much for the "rebelliousness of the male character, but . . . his ambiguous expression of anger and passivity" (85).

Even twenty years after *The Wild One* the ambiguous interplay between the characters in *Kiss of the Spider Woman* is unsettling for most viewers, but the Molina character does learn an important lesson from Valentin. Valentin teaches Molina self-respect and gives him a kiss only after Molina promises not to let anyone humiliate him or exploit him. Respect for the "other" whatever the "other" may be is a lesson that many need to learn and practice. If the assailants of Matthew Shepard held this belief, he would still be alive today. For this reason and more, educators must teach tolerance, for to subtly demand acceptance or rejection of the "other" would be a violation of our professional ethics.

The journey to the crossroads is not always an easy one nor is it one that all embrace. Arthur Penn's 1970 western *Little Big Man*, "a picaresque fable that challenged traditional genre treatment of Indian and Euro-Americans in the American West, was a surprising box-office hit" (Sklar 325). But this film also, in one startling sequence, challenges our concept of gender. The character Little Horse, a male two-spirit person who decides to live his life as a woman, is not recognized by the main character Little Big Man in the Film. In one scene Little Horse states to Little Big Man: "It pains me that you don't recognize me." Little Big Man, the white character once raised by the Cheyenne, is shocked that Little Horse in now a "woman" and that the tribe has completely accepted his transgendered state. Whereas most would be surprised if the same were to happen to one of our own friends, it is amazing that traditionally two-spirit people have been accepted as equal members in Native American tribes, and, in some cases, the two-spirit person is revered if the person is also a shaman, a healer of the community, as "such persons typically fall into pedagogical, therapeutic, and spiritual fields" (Conner 47). The irony of this film is that the traditional interpretation of the American Indian is turned upside down; that is, the end result is that "the 'savages' were really the 'human beings' and the white men crazy" (Kolker 119).

Perhaps it does take a shaman to inform us of our state. The opening scene of the controversial 1994 film *Sankofa* by Ethiopian director Haile

Gerima has a shaman confront a modern African-American model who is visiting an old slave trade site in Africa. The shaman tells the woman that she must go back to her roots in order for her to move forward. Almost instantly the character and viewer are on the pathway to the past, a past enchained by the slave trade. Gerima who also wrote the script keeps true to his independent voice, as his social realism could only survive outside the commercial film making system of Hollywood (Sklar 376-377). Obviously, discussing the topic of slavery is not easy for anyone; however, the National Endowment for the Humanities gave several of my colleagues and me a grant to work with the Smithsonian Institution to incorporate the African Diaspora into our curricula. The importance of the undertaking is even more compelling when I look out into my classes and see more students with African than European features, as Montgomery College-Takoma Park's student body is 59.7 percent African, African-born and USA-born.

What a film like *Sankofa* can do is show students the power of community ties and the perseverance of spirit in the most severe circumstances. The pain one experiences while watching *Sankofa* is surpassed by the gain students can acquire by taking the journey on the cultural crossroads. The film also has an important added feature that helps to break what Du Bois called double-consciousness or a "sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others . . ." (3). That is, this is a film written and directed by an Ethiopian, so students can view an African's interpretation of the slave trade versus a Caucasian's.

Fortunately through a different set of eyes, the 1997 film *Amistad* directed by Steven Spielberg can be used to illustrate important aspects of the slave trade. The scene in which Cinque, the ring leader, explains how he was captured by an opposing African tribe and sold into slavery to Europeans is an excellent means to get students to question social and cultural ethics. More succinctly an injustice inflicted, whether by one's own race or another race, is still an injustice. Within a "civilized" society individuals need to be reminded of the human potential to commit atrocities; otherwise we have not learned the lessons of the Middle Passage, the Wounded Knee Massacre, or the Holocaust. A way to reinforce the goodness of society even during legal slavery is to show students the Supreme Court scene in the film *Amistad*. Although the film is not true to life and the Quincy Adams character played by Anthony Hopkins makes statements that are not faithful to the hearing, the intent is similar to the actual event. Who can't feel a sense of rejoicing in the Supreme Court ruling of 8 to 1 to free the *Amistad* slaves?

To conclude, film is a dynamic medium which can be used to illustrate the universal commonalities of human experience that marry all of us to the same desires of pursuit of happiness and freedom of expression toward a

better life. Not only can we increase students' awareness of themselves and others through the use of film but we can also allow them to express themselves verbally in class discussions as well as in writing assignments which can be tailored to the nature of the objective. We as educators have an obligation to reach the past which we can do via film and literature. In doing so we must also teach tolerance, for teaching is not without moral and ethical responsibility. As Nina Tassi stated "In a genuine democracy as ours strives to be, fear, ignorance, and bigotry should not stop us from trying to appreciate the multifacets of others as well as ourselves" (10-11).

Works Cited

Conner, Randy P. "An Anthology with a Point of View." *Harvard Gay & Lesbian Review* V 3 (1998): 47-48.

Du Bois, W. E. B. *The Souls of Black Folk*. New York: Random, 1994.

Kawin, Bruce F. *How Movies Work*. Los Angeles: University of California, 1992.

Kolker, Robert. *Film, form, and culture*. Boston: McGraw-Hill College, 1999.

Sklar, Robert. *Movie-Made America: A cultural History of American Movies*. New York: Vintage Books, 1994.

Sonnichsen, C. L. *Pass of the North: Four Centuries on the Rio Grande, Volume I – 1529-1917*. El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1980.

Tassi, Nina. "The Multifaceted Self: Exploring Diversity through Autobiography." CEAMAGazine 10 (1997): 3-11.

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Classroom: The Humanist on the Firing Line

1998 Community College Humanities Association Conference
Pacific-Western Division
November 5, 1998

Stephen Dow Beckham
Lewis and Clark College

Life's missions are varied but sometimes wonderfully defined. Henry David Thoreau has inspired generations of Americans with his statement of purpose about his decision to sojourn at Walden Pond. "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately," he wrote, "to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived." Thoreau affirmed by word and deed several derivative goals: (1) the life of the mind is the noblest of human enterprises, (2) life may be best when it confronts essential facts, (3) life is a great teacher, and (4) the measure of life is to have lived and lived purposefully. In his mission statement in *Walden* and his other writings Thoreau became a great teacher, perhaps not of his own generation who largely ignored his prophetic observations, but certainly of succeeding generations. To them, and to teachers most especially, Thoreau modeled useful behaviors.

Teachers share common ground, for each, at some point in life, has made a commitment to attempt to impart the collected wisdom and skills of civilization to others. Each teacher, like Thoreau, has embraced the "life of the mind" as a gainful pursuit. Unlike Thoreau, most teachers have followed their callings down different pathways. Some have carried out their careers in the classroom. Some have followed the call to serve in academic administration. Others have chosen to teach through writing, acting, musical performance, or media productions. And some have left the profession, marching to a different drum, measuring another cadence, but, I suspect, ultimately continuing in some way as a teacher.

As a teacher—a calling which has occupied my primary energies for thirty years—I was influenced and nurtured in several ways. Those modes of instruction—my tutelage in the profession (for I never took an education class)—may prove useful for others. They certain taught me invaluable lessons in shaping a career.

Learning Teaching by Reading

As an undergraduate enrolled in a history colloquium, I encountered a professor who not only wanted to introduce students to the subject of historiography but to the craft of teaching. Among the ten books we read in ten weeks were Gilbert Highet's *The Art of Teaching* (1950) and Jacques Barzun's *Teacher in America* (1945). Now dated in their gender bias, these volumes nevertheless possess a cogency and are a frame of reference for my discovery that teaching is an "art." It is something gained by practice. It is a craft nurtured by discipline and commitment.

I further confess my attitudes about my chosen career were also influenced by two remarkable books by Dr. Arthur Bestor of the University of Washington. Reared in the heady atmosphere of the Chautauqua Society where his father was for decades the director and instigator of one of the nation's most enduring, public continuing education programs, Bestor took on the situation in the very classrooms which had prepared me for life. He wrote *Educational Wastelands: The Retreat from Learning in Our Public Schools* (1953), a sharp critique of education in America, and then, to the dismay of his critics, slapped right back at them with *The Restoration of Learning* (1955) wherein he laid out a format for educational reform.

Highet, Barzun, Bestor, and others I read laid out a checklist for a success in a career in education. I made that list, checked it twice over, and have remembered it. A successful teacher completes assigned duties in a timely manner, devotes central energies to teaching, attends required meetings and events, uses professional judgment, invests time to develop and renew skills, shares ideas and resources with colleagues, engages in self-evaluation, pursues professional growth with peers in the field, and accepts responsibility. These are the "virtues" of a good teacher. To them I would append, as well, the possession of curiosity about all things, a willingness to work hard, a passion for the subject being taught, energy that is contagious, and a willingness to learn. Reading about teaching, failings in education, and successful teaching strategies was part of my preparation for the classroom.

Learning Teaching by Observing

All teachers have expended years in the classrooms during their tutelage as students. My most important preparation for the profession came through classroom observation. I filled those hours making mental notes about what worked and what did not go right in the classroom.

I noted things done poorly. This occurred both in secondary school and in college. There were professors who were "delivered of a lecture," as we remarked, who clearly had an outline before them but who deigned to share a single topical point on the board with the victims in the classroom. We were

left wondering when point A turned to point B and when we would ever reach point C. We sat there as clueless, listening and trying to take notes. Sometimes the delivery was monotone with fragmentary sentences, lack of eye contact, and unsupported by maps, spelling out of special terms or personal surnames, or conveyed with no eye contact. One professor, in fact, managed to teach the History of Greece and Rome while seated in the chalk tray, a fact well documented by the persistent white powder burns etched in horizontal lines on his sports coat. There were also professors who ignored raised hands, veered into endless tangents, wrote in such a crabbed hand that none could read it, or who, in the last four minutes of a class session, embarked on a new lecture topic simply to fill the allotted time. These foibles were not forgotten; they were endured and etched large as things to avoid.

Fortunately there were also teachers who did things well. They were the masters in the classroom, the figures to emulate, the personalities who brought subjects alive with enthusiasm and commitment. What did they do? First, they taught with clear objectives for each lesson and, to our delight as students, laid them out. They put key points on the board; they provided them on a handout. They brought them full circle at the end of class, helping to fix the objectives of the day by drawing conclusions. They had engaging classroom manner, employing the fundamental skills of communication: eye contact, voice modulation, use of gestures, and conveying of energy. They also used mixed teaching strategies: lectures, questions and answer dialog (working the board to help the students log the key points), small group presentations, audio tapes, visuals (slides, film clips, or videotape), free-writes founded on the reading assignment, dramatizations, and field trips.

Striving to do things well by varying the fare made a positive imprint on students. It has led me to use film clips from "Shane" for dealing with western heros, audiotapes of Franklin D. Roosevelt's "Fireside Chats," and recordings of Woody Guthrie singing his marvelous ballads composed for the Bonneville Power Administration. In fact, it has contributed to one of my colleagues assuming the character and costume of Thomas Jefferson and myself donning wig and topcoat as Benjamin Franklin to hold a press conference with a plenary session of the freshman class who have been considering "our writings" on the American Revolution. Teaching techniques should vary. The effective teacher employs several in the course of instruction.

Stepping Into the Curriculum

Classrooms are of varied sizes and designs. While most teachers are locked into buildings and laboratories, some have found ways to break out of the walls and lead their students into what they are studying. I am a great advocate of putting on the boots and walking into what I teach. My parents—both

teachers—were instrumental in engendering a love of subject matter through experiential learning. As a child they took my brothers and me hiking and camping in the canyons of the Rogue River, a scenic and wild stream cutting through a ninety-mile canyon in Oregon's Siskiyous and Coast Mountains. There we had encounters with archaeological sites, Native Americans, folktales, and remarkable botanical and geological settings. Those encounters led to the research and writing of my first books: R*equiem For a People: The Rogue Indians and the Frontiersmen* (1971) and T*all Tales From Rogue River: The Yarns of Hathaway Jones* (1974). Other field trips orchestrated by my parents took us to the great Indian fishery at Celilo Falls (prior to its flooding by The Dalles Dam), to the 10,000-year-old Fort Rock Cave archaeological site, or on a marvelous ten-week trip to Europe the summer I was sixteen.

Classroom teachers likewise created means to step into the curriculum. Prof. James Kezer in General Biology introduced the various phyla which were part of the course of study by holding "biological dramas" in a lecture hall containing 300 undergraduates. Randomly selected students with fishing poles cast their lines over the lecture table in the front of the auditorium and reeled in starfish, clams, crabs, and fish, announcing the unfolding examination of Echinoderms, Mollusks, Crustaceans, and Vertebrates. Prof. Bayard McConnaughey solicited willing "assistants" to make weekend journeys to the coast to help collect specimens for the upcoming weeks of labs. Profs. Edwin Bingham and Wendell Holmes Stephenson taught their colloquia in history in the book-lined studies of their homes. Surrounded by history volumes, we explored a book-a-week and relished the intellectual atmosphere and grace with which these professors probed our comprehension of the assigned reading.

These forays into bringing the curriculum alive inspired me to find ways to do the same with my students. So, for eight summers, I developed and taught the course "Indians of the Northwest Coast." We departed with vans, utility trailer, tents, and ice chests for a week with Indian tribes and visits to the Ozette and Hoko River archaeological projects on the Olympic Peninsula, lectures and tours of the exhibits at the Royal Museum in Victoria, and a matchless sailing adventure in Desolation Sound or to the Queen Charlotte Straits in coastal British Columbia. The class had a boxed, traveling library, morning and afternoon class sessions, a research paper assignment, a daily journal to write, and encounters with native culture and history past and present.

With a botanist colleague I developed another field-based, summer course, "On the Trail of Lewis & Clark." For several summers we each took fourteen students, a dozen canoes, a drift boat, and a large utility trailer for food and gear and the thirty of us explored the route of the "Corps of Discovery"

west of the Rocky Mountains. We walked in the footsteps of the Nee-Mee-Poo over the Nez Perce or Lolo Trail in the Bitterroot Mountains, canoed the Clearwater from Orofino to Lewiston, had an optional sweat lodge session with Indian friends on the Nez Perce Reservation, encountered a largely unchanged Columbia Plateau environment in the Arid Lands Ecological Reserve at Hanford, descended the Columbia River by water from its Gorge to the Pacific, hiked Tillamook Head to Ecola where Lewis & Clark saw the great, beached whale, visited Fort Clatsop, and had a memorable crab feed hosted by the Chinook Indian Tribe. The Lewis & Clark journals served as primary texts and were supplemented by biographies or special works such as Paul Cutright's *Lewis & Clark: Pioneering Naturalists* (1969).

Yet another way to step into the curriculum is to increase the ante. A logistical trip to East Africa in May, 1997, started the process and in January, 1998, I departed with twenty-five students and an assistant for four months of study—a full semester of course work—in Kenya and Tanzania. We had lined up thirty-one lecturers, three primary outfitters, and a variety of accommodations for the study program. We traveled by dhow through the Lamu Archipelago, airplane to Zanzibar, narrow gauge railroad from Mombasa to Nairobi, camel caravan in Laikipia, lorry and Land Rover in Samburuland and the Masaai Mara, and by foot. We ascended to 16,355 feet through six ecological zones and on March 18, 1998, reached the Lenana Summit of Mt. Kenya—the entire class, in-country coordinator, and the professor all standing there at dawn to watch the sun's rays spill westward from the Indian Ocean and illuminate both the continent and the distant snows of Mt. Kilimanjaro. Homestays with the Samburu, days of wild animal observation, intensive instruction in Swahili language, independent study projects, formal student presentations, and formal lectures were all part of the fare. Each student—and the instructo—kept a daily journal and all were encouraged to illustrate their writing with watercolors or color pencils. A number of students discovered, for the first times, they were skilled artists.

Stepping into the curriculum is not done lightly. Experiential education—even more so than classroom teaching—exacts high standards and specific demands. It is critical for the teacher to maintain discipline; there can be no respite from laying out and pressing course expectations. The instructor needs, at all times, to model the right behaviors: taking notes, listening attentively to lecturers, making observations, doing the reading, and discussing the subject matter. It is critical to maintain schedules. Classes, discussions, group presentations and exams can happen as readily in a tented camp on safari or aboard a thirty-four-foot sailing boat in British Columbia as in a building on campus. It is critical, as well, to observe and manipulate as adroitly as possible the group dynamics. This means "mixing the mix" of cook and camping groups,

holding late evening "debriefing sessions" where issues can be aired and resolved, and throwing oneself into spontaneous games of "Ultimate Frisbee," running until breathless and praying that the body will hold up against all the youth enrolled in the class!

Learning Teaching While Yet Being a Student

Perhaps nothing is more important to successful teaching than to engage in the constant practice of being a student. This is a simple matter of expecting of one's self what is expected of one's students. When this is done, growth is inexorable. For a faculty member this means standing on the firing line to share findings and ideas. It means giving faculty seminars, delivering public lectures, attending professional meetings, writing articles, books, and reviews, and serving as a referee for others who are engaged in the same process.

Continuing to act as a student is, in a real sense, a humbling but ennobling experience. When it unfolds, students in courses you are teaching see you in the library. You are working the reference area, checking on-line data bases, or reading microforms. You are there on weekdays and weekends, sometimes preparing for class but also on personal research missions. You are also on the firing line, joining colleagues in a faculty forum on campus issues, speaking to parents or prospective students on the relevance of general education, taking part in an alumni seminar or weekend workshop, or delivering a formal paper at a professional meeting.

The embrace of the philosophy of acting like a student is sobering. It keeps the teacher in the real world. It reveals frustrations that students encounter. It confirms the joy of a sense of completion when a project is done. It is a real world encounter critical to enhancement of the art of teaching.

Real World Adventures

When I finished graduate school and found my first teaching position, I thought my course was fixed. I would prepare and teach history classes, mark papers, write letters of recommendation, advise students, and live a good professor's life. I would get paid to read books and work with a new crop of eager, young minds each year. Life looked good. While nothing was certain, employment happened and teaching began. Then a funny thing happened on the way to the classroom—and it has never quite let up.

My master's thesis was accepted by a university press at the time I was working on the Ph.D. Another manuscript which started as an article soon transformed into a second book with another university press. And a lecture series on Oregon Indians drew such large audiences that with National Endowment for Humanities help it was transformed into six, half-hour color television programs broadcast by CBS and Oregon Public Broadcasting. As

a young professor I found my research interests, writing, and personal commitments suddenly before a large public. The requests for assistance, involvement, and adventure unfolded rapidly. The transit from classroom to courtroom and congressional hearing room was inexorable. It happened and it occurred quickly.

A number of avenues have opened to step into everyday life. To walk those streets has led from classroom to a variety of adventures. Each, in its own way, has become an unfolding project of continuing education and of gaining new "tricks of the trade" as a teacher in the humanities. Among the dozen federal court cases in which I have been called as an expert witness, for example, was the matter of the belated assertion by the State of Oregon of ownership of the Chetco River. A crystal-clear stream in the southwest corner of the state, the Chetco had seven gravel companies on its banks and numbers of property owners all believing they owned the streambed. Indeed most had paid taxes for years on lands which they assumed extended to the center of the channel of the river. The State felt otherwise and asserted in its lawsuit that on February 14, 1859, statehood day, it had, as a matter of federal law, gained ownership of the beds of all navigable rivers and lakes in Oregon. The State sued to assert its ownership.

As witness for the State Land Board my task was to document as fully as possible the actual navigable uses of the Chetco River prior to 1859 as well as its "capability to be navigated" subsequent to 1859. Both were factors in the assertion of the state's "navigation servitude." As a history teacher, I have for years told my students: "If you can imagine a source exists, then it may exist, and your task is to find it." In this case, as in others, I had to embrace my own advice.

I imagined the Chetco Indians used canoes on the river. My research took me to eight diaries penned in April, 1792, describing the sea-going canoes of the southwest coast of Oregon to the manuscript field notes of Dr. John Peabody Harrington. Decades ago Harrington interviewed Chetco informants about their language and lifeways. In his notes I found descriptions of the canoe types and information that the Chetco had "ascended the river as far as Tu-wa-hwin-ti," a village thirteen miles upstream, where annually they harvested acorns.

I imagined I could find old newspapers. In time I located the back files of the *Gold Beach Gazette* and the *Wedderburn Radium*. Published between 1895 and 1908, these weeklies documented local news from along the south coast. In them I found mention of log drives and shipment by scows of thousands of pounds of bark from oak trees destined for leather-processing plants in San Francisco. In 1892 Lt. Francis Rawn Shunk of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers mounted a harbor study of the Chetco estuary. In his report, Lt. Shunk wrote: "in winter its present condition is such that a small steamer could probably ascend it for 15 to 18 miles, if there any object in doing so." In

the manuscript fieldnotes of the cadastral surveyors working for the General Land Office I discerned that in running each section line in fourteen river miles at no point could the field crews cross the river; it was too deep. They had to use flags and trigonometric tables to calculate the lines by traverses. They also noted the river width at every section line-crossing—at the time of lowest stream flow—and at no point was the river less than 105 feet wide!

Working as an expert witness for the State Land Board in federal court had increased my research skills and given me a "whole new bag of tricks" for teaching the required methods seminar, Historical Materials. By going on the firing line to be deposed and testify in court, I had grown leaps and bounds as a teacher. By working with oral informants I had also discovered to my amazement the attorneys for the defendant gravel companies—perhaps inspired by my deposition testimony about Indian dugout canoes—had actually found and hauled a 500-pound redwood dugout to the river and videotaped themselves paddling and polling their way upstream for five miles to prove the river was not navigable. I told the attorneys for the Department of Justice about this documented action. They promptly subpoenaed the videotape and played fifteen minutes of it court. The moment was almost poetic—the lawyers who had interrogated were there in living color in the courtroom documenting just how navigable the river actually was. Each time they passed another gravel dredge or pile of materials, I wanted to cheer! The State of Oregon won its case—the Chetco River was "navigable" and its streambed for fourteen miles to the boundary of the Siskiyou National Forest **belonged** to the citizens of Oregon.

Much of my efforts over the past dozen years have focused on researching and writing for museums and exhibits. The projects have ranged from the sprawling Hong Kong History Museum in Kowloon to "Uncle Sam in the Oregon Country," a special "States of the Nation" exhibit for the Library of Congress. Researching and writing the brochures, signs, and panel copy for the $9 million National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center at Baker City, Oregon, however, deepened my teaching in other ways. During the course of work, I read and drew notes from over 150 Oregon Trail diaries. In addition I pursued reminiscent accounts and reviewed a rich secondary literature. Here was chance, however, to explode myths and attempt to bring new perspectives to bear on the "glorious deeds of the pioneers."

The Department of Interior extended its trust. I was given virtually free hand to script the center and its several themes and storylines. When visitors enter the facility they encounter a revisionist message. The initial panel copy reads:

> No one had ever seen anything quite like it before. More than 300,000 men, women, and children crossed the trail. They sensed they were making history. While heroic, they were an imperfect people. Intolerant, prone to violence, exploitative, and sometimes ill-tempered, they carried mixed baggage.
>
> They brought their institutions, ideas, talents, and energies to a land already occupied. They displaced the Indians and wrested a new territory and several states from what they perceived as wilderness. Despite some tragic consequences, the story of the Oregon trail is an epic of human endurance, and reminds us of those who came as Empire builders.

Interpretive centers, museums, and television programs have become my biggest classrooms. Rather than speaking to twenty-five, or fifty, or a hundred students, or to 4,000-10,000 purchasers of a book, these venues have permitted my labors as a humanist to reach hundreds of thousands and, in one instance, an estimated viewing audience of over six million in a single evening broadcast. Classrooms thus come in many sizes when a teacher enters the "real world."

Like Henry David Thoreau in his reflection about the measure of life as he faced death, teachers should discover that they have lived and lived deliberately. Like great teachers I have known, I urge each of us to continue to master the craft of teaching by reading, observing, stepping into the curriculum, and yet being a student. We should embrace the real world and use those experiences to store our minds with useful information, new skills, and new experiences. Let us further remember that teaching is founded on some cardinal dictates: professionalism, positive human relations, creative curriculum development, caring instruction and assessment, and careful student management.

When I think about teaching and the journey on which it has taken me, I am reminded of the words of Elizabeth Wood. An Oregon Trail pioneer, Wood stopped on the banks of the Snake River in August, 1851, and wrote a remarkable self-assessment of her situation:

> After experiencing so many hardships, you doubtless will think I regret taking this long and tiresome trip, and would rather go back than proceed to the end of

> my journey. But, no, I have a great desire to see Oregon, and, besides, there are many things we meet with the beautiful scenery of plain and mountain, their inhabitants, the wild animals and the Indians and natural curiosities in abundance, to compensate us for the hardships and mishaps we encounter. People who do come must not be worried or frightened at trifles; they must put up with storm and cloud as well as calm and sunshine; wade through rivers, climb steep hills, often go hungry, keep cool and good natured always, and possess courage and ingenuity equal to any emergency, and they will endure to unto the end. A lazy person should never think of going to Oregon." (Wood 1984:172-173)

I would second Wood's cogent observations and add that a lazy person should never try to become a teacher!

Autobiographical Theory: Moving Students from the Margins to the Mainstream

Jill Karle Leahman and Bettye S. Walsh
Piedmont Virginia Community College

To be marginal is to be inconsequential, unempowered, disconnected. Marginality allows one the view or "gaze" of the mainstream but because of culturally bounded values or practices denies the marginal access. Further, marginalization, as a passive, quiet, almost unobtrusive form reminds those in the mainstream (the dominant group) what is important, what must be kept and cultivated and what must be rooted out. In our teaching, the thread that we carry through most assignments is a focus on the margins, whether those subaltern groups are women, gays, Jews or other. Learning to empathize with others who have historically been "othered" is perhaps one of the most important humanizing tasks of higher education. Understanding the margins is critical.

Institutions, individuals, even disquisitions like the personal narrative can be marginalized. In some sense, community colleges are marginalized. We are often overlooked and voiceless, fitting as we do between the secondary school and the four-year college—not a "real" college in the minds of so many people. And yet we know that what we offer is unique and important. As we share our stories, we become part of the larger academic mainstream. Further, our students are marginalized. They often feel that they lack intellectual power and are consequently disconnected from the academy. They come with their stories and hope that their past is strong enough to hold them aloft as they strive for new ways of knowing and new levels of skill. Honoring their stories helps empower them. Finally, even a mode of discourse like the personal narrative has, over the years, been marginalized in the academy. James Moffet adeptly captures this trend: "Many teachers will call every kind of writing that is not term-paper or essay-question stuff 'personal' or 'creative' writing...and hence put it in a bag that goes up on a shelf. Priority goes, of course, to exposition..."(qtd. in Hyder 50).

While many composition courses begin with narrative, the pedagogical goal is to move students to other types of discourse, as far away from the personal as possible. Often such expository assignments yield awkward, voiceless tomes, which Moffet describes as essays but which become nothing more than "forced writing on given topics" (qtd. in Hyder 50). In truth, this forced dichotomy between "personal" and "expository" prose is not only unnecessary but unnatural (Hyder). Personal writing breathes life into prose of any kind and is especially important for students. Ponsot and Dean suggest

that all good writing is personal, "not because the material is personal but because it bears the mark of being written by a person" (104).

Rather than deepen the schism between the personal and expository schools, can composition instructors utilize existing theory to develop pedagogical models which honor the story, maintain the strong narrative voice yet move the fledgling writers from the margins of their experience to a more global perspective that explores and explains the mainstream? This paper, a segment of a longer work presented at the Conference on College Composition and Communication in Chicago in April, funded by the VCCS Professional Development Initiative argues that autobiographical theory offers a tapestry technique which effectively overlays the limited "me-ness" of the personal narrative with a more global perspective demanded by the rigors of academe.

Autobiographical Theory: A Brief

William Pinar believes that a curriculum which "denies teachers' and students' interpretations or accords them a marginal status, functions to either collapse the self into the subject material or drive the self away" (*Curriculum Theorizing* 209). On one extreme we find those who have an encyclopedia of knowledge but little original thought and on the other a withdrawn, potentially angry, individual. A curriculum which honors personal interpretation, which honors the person, will drive back the margins and provide a more inclusive and accommodating environment. By acknowledging the person and the energy of his or her past, we are able to welcome them in and encourage them to take part in the larger academic conversation.

Autobiographical theory creates an opportunity to weave the personal and the academic into a more integrated whole. William Pinar's concept of *currere* provides the theoretical base: *Currere*, the Latin infinitive for curriculum, means "to run" as in to "run a course." He elaborates by suggesting that "it is *the* [emphasis added] running of the course. The course most broadly is our lives...and the running, is our experience of our lives" (qtd. in Hyder 8). Pinar defines *currere* as "the experience of experience," a revolutionary idea that both invites and demands reflective consciousness of the self. Such a consciousness is not usually comprehended in a linear trajectory (Grumet *Existential*). Grumet suggests that the movement is horizontal. Horizontal moves encourage students to take their personal experiences as a data source because as they analyze a text, they also analyze their own experience eventually finding a dominant thread—the eventual basis for their writing and research.

Autobiographical theory is designed to guide reflections and to look upon experience as a continuum that moves from the past to the future. Pinar identifies four steps— regression, progression, analysis and synthesis—and explains them in the following manner:

> The first step of the method is regressive. One returns to the past, to capture it as it was, and as it hovers over the present. ...*Re*—back. *Gradi*—to go back. One goes back, and there finds the past intact. The past is entered, lived in, but not necessarily succumbed to. (*Sexual Politics* 21-24)

By acknowledging the past, by immersing the self in the past, we "tune-in" to motivation, personal drives and reactions. The student commits these to paper as brainstorms, clusters, cubes, journal jottings. The threads, to continue the tapestry motif, are identified from the past.

With the past on the page, the writer shifts to the future in the progressive phase:

> Progressive derives from *pro* meaning "before" and *gradi* meaning "to step, go." In this phase we look the other way. We look, in Sartre's language, at what is not yet the case, what is not yet present. We have found that the future is present in the same sense that the past is present. It influences, in complicated ways, the present; it forms the present. (Pinar, *Sexual Politics* 24-25)

In this stage Pinar acknowledges the human tendency to think of the future, of what will be, and to acknowledge how these possibilities influence the moment.

The "moment" is the time at hand, rarely analytically considered, only described. But the present is axial. Without it, the writer's voice becomes lost in the margins of past and future experience. Pinar articulates this phase:

> One takes photographs, and sets them aside. What is left? Describe the biographic present, exclusive of the past and future, but inclusive of responses to them.... *Ana*—up, throughout. *Lysis*—a loosening. Conceptualization is detachment from experience. Bracketing what is, what was, what can be, one is loosened from it, potentially more free of it, hence more free to freely choose the present, and future. (*Politics and Sexuality* 25-26)

The threads, in the fourth stage, become untangled and are now ready to be reassembled into a whole: "Synthetical. *Syn* means 'together' and *tithenai* means 'to place.' ...What conceptual gestalt is finally visible? That is, what is one's 'point of view?'" (Pinar, *Politics and Sexuality* 26-27).

The process encourages slow deliberation and introspection. It is at once deeply personal and objective. When applied to the teaching of writing, this theory allows us to "conceive again, to turn back the conceptual structures that support our actions in order to reveal the rich and abundant experience they conceal" (Grumet 139). The concealed personal experiences are more universal, more global, more applicable to academic perspective than our students have been brought to understand.

Autobiographical Theory in Practice

Several years ago, we selected *The Killing Fields* as our "text" to prompt students in a developmental writing class. The film worked as a piece of cinematic literature, featured a compelling story, raised many issues for discussion, and was relatively unknown to most of our students. The story focuses on the survival of Dith Pran, a photographer/journalist assistant, who is captured by the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia during the 70s in what might be called the Cambodian Holocaust. This assignment became a marker event in our teaching, for we also included Pinar's notion of *currere* and autobiography. We adapted the theory, following Pinar's suggestion to make theory useful, and extended the inquiry to include the personal, the community and the larger world (delimited by the ideas of the student).

Students were asked to take reaction notes while they watched the film, not to trace the development of plot but rather to note aspects of the film that moved them in some way. Notes varied dramatically; but contrary to some assignments, all students had an idea to share. Group brain storming, another oral stage, moved the class from a discussion of particular incidents in the film to a discussion of themes developed in the film. Students, trained to move from general to specific, found the movement from the specific to the general liberating. This movement also provided the bridge into Pinar's notion of *currere*, the experience of experience. The students began exploring one compelling theme and made journal entries related to how this theme played out in the film, in their own lives, in a community and in the world-at-large in the past, at the present moment, and in the possible future. From copious journal entries, they found a thread that unified their thinking and turned this into the basis for an essay.

We have repeated the assignment in Preparation for College Writing (ENG 01 and ENG 03) and College Composition (ENG 111) and have found

that students across ability levels respond well. Essays moved away from the forced writing on an assigned topic to embrace a range of interesting topics grounded in the personal. As Madeline Grumet suggests, "it is rare that these pieces are burdened with poor writing. People usually make sense when they know what they are talking about" (143). We have found this to be true; when the subject matures out of the personal, students feel comfortable and reach well beyond their preconceived ideas of what is possible. The margins of their experience are the vehicle to the mainstream. The following excerpts provide an example of the potential for blending autobiographical theory with an internationally-focused, historically-based, research-oriented assignment. Student 1 was moved by the notion of a small ideological group wreaking havoc on a nation and the delicate balance between a group doing good and doing evil. Student 2 was moved by Pran's will to survive and how survival instinct is developed and shared.

Excerpt Student 1

Today's Militia Threat Growing up in Pennsylvania, within 3 hours of Philadelphia, I became aware at an early age of the protection offered by the historical militia. Independence Hall in Philadelphia embodies the struggles of the militia against England. The Pennsylvania militia itself participated in almost all of the campaigns of the War of Independence (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania 1). Americans fought as a whole against taxes and other revenue-raising measures, trade regulations, and a lack of representation by England. These Americans were part of the Continental Army and the state militias. The combined total of men numbered approximately 20,000 (Britannica 1). This protection from tyranny, gained by the historical militia, is threatened by the power of today's widespread, well-connected militia and should be monitored in the future by the local, state, and Federal governments. In comparison to the historical militia, today's militia is almost as large and probably more threatening. Reporters for *USA Today Magazine*, Halpern, Rosenberg, and Suall, note that the current militia movement consists of more than 15,000 members in at least 39 states (1). The Director of the Southern Poverty Law Center in Alabama, Morris Dees, says, "There is a growing danger posed by those unauthorized militias. In our view. This mixture of armed groups and those who hate is a recipe for disaster" (qtd. in Robinson 6). The Center estimates there are 950 units encompassing all 50 states (Robinson 6). The Commonwealth of Virginia,one of the states involved, has a militia that is well connected via the Internet and newsletters, and poses a threat to the government. On June 7, 1995, Bob Herbert, a writer for the *New York Times*, the Federal bureau of Investigation (FBI) had confiscated a computer disk with

information to be published by the Virginia Citizens' Militia in a newsletter. The information on the disk included the following statements: "We will destroy targets such as telephone relay centers, bridges, fuel storage tanks, communication towers, radio stations, and airports.... Human targets will be engaged when it is beneficial to the cause to eliminate particular individuals who oppose us" (qtd.in Swomley 1). The Virginia Militia also has a posting on the Internet (see Appendix A). This document describes the supposed threat of a "New World Order," a plot to send United States (U.S.) troops overseas and to house foreign soldiers on military bases here in the U.S. The reason for the transferring of troops, according to the militia, is to give the U.S. government access to troops more willing to fire on its citizens. Local groups are not the only militias that are well connected. Across the U.S. militias disseminate materials and information. According to Bill Morlin, a writer for the *Spokesman Review*, instructions for making bombs, outfitting a paramilitary group, and choosing good targets are available to members of the militia. This information can be obtained via mail-order books, pamphlets, telephone hotlines, and the Internet sites run by the militias (3). Halpern, Rosenberg, and Suall report in their article, "Militia Movement: Prescription for Disaster," that the *Tennessee Militia News* advertises materials for distribution that explain how to make automatic weapons and explosives. The authors further note that the Militia of Montana promotes and sells, through its catalog, a comprehensive bomb-making manual entitled *The Road Back* (10,12). The catalog describes the book as "a plan for the restoration of freedom when our country has been taken over by its enemies" (qtd. in Halpern, Rosenberg, and Suall 13).
REGRESS TO PAST *Capture idea because it hovers over the present Importance of idea to* ***Past*** *The personal* **LINGER IN PRESENT** *Acting out of past superimposes past action patterns on present situations Importance of idea to* ***Present*** *moment in time The community—VA The larger World* **LOOK TO FUTURE** *Importance of idea in years to come*

Excerpt Student 2

Leukemia: The Killing Field As the Khmer Rouge forces captured Phnom Penh in April 1975, a horrible era in Cambodia's history was emerging. Cities and towns were evacuated and virtually the entire population was sent into the "killing fields." Thomas Omestad writes in *U. S. News and World Report* that, "Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge killed between 1.6 and 2 million people—a fifth of Cambodia's population—through executions, starvation, and exhaustion from over-work" (2). He also tells of "Human skulls bobbing in a rain-washed ditch, the shoes of victims slung over the club that bludgeoned them, and a gaunt boy—hands tied and feet shackled—staring at an empty plate. Such was the

hell known as Cambodia during the four year rule of the Khmer Rouge" (1). One survivor of the Khmer killings was a Cambodian journalist, Dith Pran. After sending his family to freedom and a presumably better life, Pran was captured by the Khmer Rouge and the jungle became his home. Pran's determination to survive carried him through the tortuous days at the hands of the Khmer: the will to survive led him to freedom. Whether our survival depends on escaping political oppression or surviving a deadly illness, the drive for personal survival extends communally to survival with the family and globally to give hope for survival to others. Jake's personal story of survival starts with a diagnosis of acute lymphocytic leukemia (ALL) in May of 1990. Leukemia is cancer of the bone marrow, the organ that produces the body's blood cells. For people with leukemia, the bone marrow produces a large number of abnormal white blood cells that interfere with normal blood cell production. The body needs normal blood cells to fight infection, carry oxygen to tissues, and prevent bleeding (Stewart 27). After diagnosis, treatment began immediately with chemotherapy. Chemo travels through the bloodstream and kills rapidly dividing cells throughout the body. The central nervous system is given chemotherapy in the fluid surrounding the brain and the spinal chord (*Leukemia* 21). A 3-cycle chemotherapy regimen is used to reach remission: induction, consolidation, and maintenance therapy. Induction therapy is used to destroy all detectable leukemia cells and lasts about 4 week. Consolidation therapy is a short term, intensive treatment, and maintenance therapy uses lower dosages of drugs but over a longer period of time. To maintain remission, therapy is usually given for a period of 2-3 years (29). Survival during the 3 years of chemotherapy is a delicate balance of administering treatment powerful enough to fight the cancer without killing the patient. ... But after 3 years of chemotherapy and 2 more years of remission, Jake relapsed in his testicles and bone marrow. The ultimate challenge for survival was just beginning.... Jake's courageous battle with leukemia was a testament of survival for the rest of his family. His war for survival became the family war for survival. Each family member donated blood for "tissue typing" and prepared themselves mentally for the possibility of becoming a bone marrow donor, the only strategy left that might give this seven-year old a chance at survival. **REGRESS TO PAST** *Capture idea because it hovers over the present The larger World Importance of idea to* ***Past*** **LINGER IN PRESENT** *The personal Acting out of past superimposes past action patterns on present situations Importance of idea to* ***Present*** *moment in time* **LOOK TO FUTURE** *The Community—Family Importance of idea in years to come*

Summary

Autobiographical theory may not erase the tension between personal narrative and expository prose within the academy, but it offers faculty across disciplines who want students to produce more thoughtful, meaningful, and enlivened prose a construct that can move students from the margins of personal experience to the mainstream of a more global perspective.

This article represents our own practice of autobiographical theory: we regressed to that which is important to us, marginalization; we considered how that idea, marginalization, in a complicated way forms or hovers over the present and future of our students; and we adapted the past, present, and future aspects of the theory to include personal, communal, and global concerns. In a very real sense, this article is *currere,* the experience of experience, **shared**.

Works Cited

Grumet, Madeleine. "Autobiography and Reconceptualization." *Curriculum and Instruction.* Eds. Henry Giroux, Anthony Penna, William Pinar. Berkeley: McCutchan Publishing, 1981. 139-144.

———. *Existential and Phenomenological Foundations of Currere: Self-Report in Curriculum Inquiry.* ERIC Document. ED104475.

Hyder, Tom. *A Model for Remedial Writing Instruction Based on Autobiographical Theory and Informed by Critical Pedagogy.* Disseratation. University of Virginia, 1998.

Pinar, William. *Autobiography, Politics and Sexuality: Essays in Curriculum Theory 1972 - 1992.* New York: Peter Lang, 1994.

———. *Curriculum Theorizing: The Reconceptualists.* Berkeley: McCutchan Publishing, 1975.

———. *The Method of Currere.* ERIC Document ED104766.

Ponsot, Marie and Rosemary Deen. *Beat Not the Poor Desk.* Upper Montclair, NJ: Boynton/Cook, 1982.

Focus On Foreign Language Standards Within The Community College Context

Richard Kalfus, Ph.D.
St. Louis Community College

INTRODUCTION

. Community Colleges "must get in the act"

There was a time when the community college was the neglected step-child of the four year transfer institution, considered by many high school students and counselors as the place to go if you had been academically unsuccessful in high school, if you were from a family with limited financial resources or if you were one of the many who just didn't know if college was the right place for you anyway. Certainly many of these students enter the community college. But times have changed and the student profile of the community college has become much broader: the average age of a community college student is 28; many are bright students whose families have become frightened by the ever-increasing cost of college tuition, not to mention room and board, and who believe that the quality and more individualized instruction in the nurturing environment of a community college will be an ideal introduction to college life for their children; the high tech work place demands retraining of workers who study in community colleges at all hours of the day and evening because of the amazing variety of course offerings. A Texas study, for example, indicated that well over 50% of all undergraduate college students in the United States are enrolled in a community college (Texas Association of Community College Report 1996).

The Community College Humanities Association and the National Endowment for Humanities, recognizing the increasing necessity for global education in today's interdependent world invited 30 community colleges through out the country to participate in a four year funded project aimed at improving the quality of foreign language and international education. A published study, highlighting successful community college foreign language and international education programs, was written as a mandate to all community colleges to allocate more resources—both human and financial in an effort to expand, and in many cases, to take the first steps to internationalize their curriculum (Eisenberg, 19). By virtue of the statistical data indicating that the community colleges serve such a large population of post-secondary students, it is not surprising that the National Standards in Foreign Language

Education Project (1996) will have a special impact on the way foreign languages are taught and assessed at the community college level.

ARTICULATION

In order for the National Standards Guidelines to have a meaningful impact nation-wide on foreign language education, it will be necessary for school districts and institutions of higher education to strengthen, and, in some cases, to even begin articulation initiatives. Far more must be done to achieve a *seamless* integration of Foreign Language programs not only from one level to another within the same school or within the same school district but also, and perhaps most difficult to achieve, from one institution to another. Most necessary from our point of view is the need for improved articulation between high school, community college and four year transfer institutions, particularly the state colleges and universities where most transfer students continue their education. A number of states such as Minnesota and Ohio have taken on this challenge and with major national and state funding have established collaborative, articulation teams which include Foreign Languageeducators from all levels of instruction. Minnesota Foreign Language educators, for example, have collaborated on formulating a mission statement which emphasizes proficiency-oriented language instruction and assessment: "Proficiency-based instruction is student-centered and builds upon what students need, already know, and can do, and it respects diverse learning styles, while encouraging the development of a wide range of skills and learning strategies." (Chalhoub-Deville 1997: 501). It is the community college Foreign Language educator who generally faces a classroom composed of many students who learn very differently from one another. The ability to use a variety of teaching methodologies to respond to different student learning styles is now considered one of the essential factors when hiring full-time community college faculty (Gibson Benninger and Ratcliff, 1996)

As community college Foreign Language educators, we find ourselves in a difficult and even vulnerable position. With more and more students attending the community colleges across the country, we are educating more students in post secondary education than ever before. Positioned *in the middle* between the high school and 4 year college or university, we find ourselves, as Foreign Language educators, with the frequently frustrating task of trying to please two large constituencies. We must place high school Foreign Language learners into the most appropriate level, instruct them so well that they will successfully fulfill the language requirement either with us or at a 4 year transfer institution (i.e., most often completion of the intermediate one course with a C or higher grade) This task seems simple enough but it is fraught

with a number of obstacles which must be addressed, if the national standards' goals are to be achieved.

Thanks to the efforts of concerned administrators and program organizers at the American Counsel on the Teaching of Foreign Languages and many dedicated community college educators a Special Interest Group (SIG) for community colleges was established in 1995 and sessions were held at the last three ACTFL conferences. Many issues impacting on both articulation for the community college Foreign Language instructor and student and on the implementation of national standards were discussed and are in the process of being addressed. Following are some major concerns:

- **Student Placement**

A national survey among community college educators has revealed that the vast majority of community colleges have no consistent or official means of placing high school or returning older students into Foreign Language courses. In many cases, counselors and advisors are given guidelines based on a perspective Foreign Language student's previous Foreign Language experience and grades, in order to direct his/her placement, but there are few mechanisms in place which enforce such guidelines. The result: Many students who have studied Foreign Language for two or more years in high school register for beginning courses. The community college SIG task force has developed a comprehensive set of placement guidelines with a rationale for encouraging students to place themselves in courses consistent with their knowledge base (see Appendix A) The Central States Professional Development Committee with a modest grant has developed a comprehensive data base of full and adjunct Foreign Language faculty within the 17 state CSC region and this information will be distributed to them.

- **Setting Standards Our Students Can Meet**

While community college Foreign Language instructors must always be aware that many of their students will transfer to four year institutions to complete a Foreign Language requirement, we must not become a slave to the often unrealistic standards set by the transfer institution. While most community college students are encouraged to fulfill their language requirement at the community college, it is a fact that many will begin with us but continue at the transfer school. If we indeed wish to follow the national standard guidelines for Communication — *Standard 1.1.: Students engage in conversation, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinion (Standards For Foreign Language*

Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century 1996: 38) then we must recognize the fact that pair and group work are essential in achieving this goal and that the process is often slow and time-consuming. Unfortunately, some transfer institutions who receive our students for the completion of a third and final semester of foreign language study often teach more traditionally than we do, using less collaborative activities, placing greater emphasis on students learning an ordered set of facts about the language (i.e., grammar rules, vocabulary out of context). We, at the community college, are often berated by our counterparts at the transfer institutions that our students have not *covered* their first year text and therefore are not adequately prepared for intermediate level work. Given the profile of the average community college Foreign Language learner (see below) and the reality that collaborative and pair modalities promote active use of language skills but are often time consuming endeavors, then it becomes even more apparent that *covering* all chapters of a beginning text is not always feasible. At the community college, we pride ourselves in being able to give individual attention to our students. We try our very best to create a relaxed learning environment which promotes risk taking. We practice what the standards guidelines encourage by providing "a safe place in which to experiment with linguistic and cultural challenges." (*Standards...1996: 34)* Most first year classes at the community college range in size between 20 and 25 students—not an ideal situation, but a workable one. Many state colleges and universities often teach 30-35 students in first year classes and manage to *cover* a beginning text. There is more focus on the memorization of words and grammar rules; less time is devoted to exploring and using communication strategies. Thus, completing the language requirement in an intermediate one class at a four year institution can often be a discouraging experience for the community college transfer student.

Some text book publishers are addressing the issue and several, shorter, first year Foreign Language texts are being written especially for the community college student (e.g., Houghton Mifflin's *Le FranVais Express* is an "essentials" text designed for mature, non-traditional students who may already have a job or other responsibilities that prevent them from concentrating on their studies full-time)[1] Yet, it remains to be seen if this will not exacerbate the articulation problems, if the four year institutions do not acknowledge the diverse needs and preparation of the students who come to them.. A larger issue is at stake here as the standards task force acknowledges: "A major articulation issue is the placement of students who have participated in a standards-based program before new assessment instruments have been developed to measure what they know and are able to do." (*Standards...* 1996: 98) A needs assessment survey taken at the Advisory Council meeting in Milwaukee during the 1998 Central States Conference revealed a genuine

interest among Foreign Language colleagues who are currently using the same text books and ancillary material to get together formally in future CSC conference sessions to share ideas. This could be an encouraging step towards improved articulation.

Praise For The High School Foreign Language Programs

Communities, a major component of the standards guidelines—*Standard 5.1: Students use the language both within and beyond the school setting* acknowledges the importance of the language learner to be able to communicate with speakers throughout his or her life and beyond the classroom setting (i.e. in the community and abroad). The implementation of this standard has already impacted on the quality of the students who come to us at the community college. Much of this is do to the outstanding quality and wide-spread availability of student exchange programs. It is very encouraging to continue teaching a foreign language to students who are already "turned on" by having had a positive experience in a foreign country. Home stays have particularly given them first hand knowledge of the value of being able to communicate adequately to native speakers even though their language abilities may have only been of a "survival nature." Many students now come to the community college having personally experienced some cultural faux pas and linguistic misunderstandings. They have acquired a real sensitivity to cultural diversity and an appreciation of values different from their own. Community college Foreign Language faculty are able, for example, to build on students' past experience living in a foreign environment, encouraging them to maintain contact with host families and friends by communicating through letters, e-mail and audio or video taped exchanges. At St. Louis Community College, for example, Foreign Language students who have participated in high school exchange programs have become active members of the college's International Club. These students are the driving force behind the organization of an annual international banquet with international, intercultural entertainment which has an annual attendance of 250 to 300 students, their family members, faculty and residents of the community.

For so many years, the community college Foreign Language departments could only offer three, sometimes four semesters in a given language. Thanks to the increasing number of students who have participated in foreign exchange programs, and to the increasing number of students who have had four and five years of Foreign Language education on the high school level in challenging honors or Advanced Placement classes, we are now able to offer more advanced classes at the community college. St. Louis Community

College at Meramec, for example, after a 20 year hiatus, has been teaching regularly advanced conversation and composition classes in Spanish and German.

STUDENT PROFILE

· Problems facing our students with English

Many community college students who register for Foreign Language courses come to us with very weak English skills (e.g., they have difficulties in picking out the subject, direct or indirect object of a simple sentence, let alone in recognizing a complex sentence introduced by a subordinating conjunction). A small number of these students, are simultaneously enrolled in a developmental English class. A 25 year veteran community college teacher of French administered to all her classes a short, simple diagnostic test in which students had to underline such parts of speech as a direct object, an adverb, a prepositional phrase, a coordinating conjunction. The results were appalling with more than 85 % of the students taking the test scoring under 65% (Outs: 1996)

While this state of affairs is frustrating, the standard guidelines have motivated many of us in community college Foreign Language education to make connections with other disciplines. What could be more natural than turning to our colleagues who teach English composition for help. Most community colleges have state of the art English reading and writing centers, staffed with experts who deal daily with exactly the type of problems facing our students. While it seems so logical a connection, it has taken the national standards emphasis on making *Connections: Standard 3.1—Students reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language* to lead the community college Foreign Language teacher to the English department. (*Standards....* 1996: 50)

We now send many of our students to the English writing lab with specific assignments; Emily Spinelli's wonderful text, *English Grammar For Students of Spanish* serves as a superb resource (1998).[2] It would be an overstatement to say that the students who take advantage of these opportunities, return to us as model Foreign Language students; yet, for the most part, they do return with both a better understanding of the grammatical structures in the Fl they are studying, and a new appreciation and awareness of English structure. As one student put it, "I will never again be able to hear some of my friends say: 'They was here last night for dinner' without shuddering."

Will all students who have problems grasping grammatical concepts in English become fluent speakers in a foreign language? Probably not. Will their

study of a foreign language be a useless endeavor? Definitely not. The foreign language teaching profession owes a great deal to the standards task force for its efforts in trying to eliminate the heretofore *elitis*t view of foreign language education. "Many school personnel understand that the value of language learning goes beyond the practical benefits of communication. All children profit in their thinking skills by learning how a different language system operates, how languages influence one another, and how different cultures express ideas. Students once shut out of language courses prosper in classrooms that acknowledge that ALL students are capable of learning other languages given opportunities for quality instruction." (*Standards...1996: 19).* This more inclusive view of foreign language education is of particular importance for the American community college where most mission statements emphasize quality education for students with diverse needs and skills. Some of our students are not college bound, yet their lives will also be affected by the shrinking, interdependent world where both "survival skills" in communicating in a foreign language and a sensitivity to cultures other than American will be essential. The fallacy inherent in an elitist concept of foreign language education has been substantiated. A principal in a New York State high school did not inform teachers which of their students were non-Regents students (New York State Regents exams are uniform achievement tests required of college-bound students for graduation.) The result: the overall number of students obtaining Regents' diplomas at the end of the school year increased by 15%; many of these students were enrolled in foreign language classes (Shanker 1995: E7).

Time constraints:

Most community college students work between 25 and 40 hours a week *and* register for 12-15 credit hours a semester. While this may be quite unrealistic from the standpoint of successfully approaching the study of a foreign language which meets 4 or 5 times a week, it *is* the reality with which we must learn to live. Working students invariably come in tired and late to class. Certainly one should set clear ground rules, even initiate a point system which encourages punctuality and regular attendance. But it is counter-productive to lose one's temper. Getting visibly angry backfires as many community college Foreign Language faculty will attest: it increases the tension level of the class and destroys very quickly the non-threatening environment which insecure Foreign Language learners (and we have many at the community college) need in order to actively participate in the learning process.

Assignments are not always completed for the next class and can easily impede the success of group and pair activities based on a previous

assignment. Many of us have learned to deal with this problem in various ways: by giving all students some time in class to prepare for a collaborative activity, by carefully modeling what we expect to take place in a given activity, by drilling a particular structure prior to group work, by taking full advantage of class diversity and mixing groups of 18 year olds, fresh out of high school with highly motivated returning homemakers and retired professionals who usually have well prepared the assignment at home (see ahead under discussion of diversity.)

Student Diversity

One of the major objectives of the national standards for Foreign Language education is to assist American students in gaining insight into the perspectives, practices and products commonly shared by people who speak another native language and live in another country. *Cultures* is one of the five goal areas identified by the standards task force: *Standard 2.—Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationships between the practices and perspectives of the cultures studied (Standards* ....1996: 46). The diversity of the student body in a typical community college has placed the community college Foreign Language instructor in an advantageous position. The community college Foreign Language classroom is a microcosm of the real world: diverse abilities from the gifted to the developmental or physically challenged student, from the inner-city African American, Asian or Hispanic student to the middle class, suburban student, from the American student whose family settled in the US in the 19th century to the recent Chinese, Russian, Polish or Bosnian immigrant who is simultaneously learning a foreign language, English and American culture *in the Foreign Language classroom*, from the 18 year-old high school graduate whose career goals are indefinite and changing constantly to the returning 40 year-old homemaker or the unfulfilled factory worker who know exactly where they are going and have no time to lose in getting there. Ask most community college faculty about the diversity issues which they face daily in their classrooms and they will readily admit to the many frustrations they create in lesson planning. At the same time—and especially for the Foreign Language instructor—this situation is one of the most energizing and rewarding aspects of teaching in a community college.

Our textbooks have broadened their base by becoming more inclusive: the German texts, for example, include more and more dialogues and readings involving foreign workers from Turkey whose children were born and raised in Germany; the French textbooks are far more sensitive to the French speaking world outside of France—in Quebec, in Senegal, in Martinique to name just a few areas. We are at a great advantage in most community colleges to treat

issues of cultural diversity by the very fact that the students in our own classes come from many different countries.

Cultural diversity and the value of studying a foreign language became especially relevant in one of my own beginning German classes. I am certain that my experience was not unique. A Bosnian, Russian and Polish student were enrolled in the same beginning German class: all three of the foreign born students spoke English fluently but with a noticeable accent, all three could speak two or three other foreign languages in addition to English and the German they were now learning. These students also shared regularly with their American-born classmates their views on American culture and society, formed by their particular frame of references. My students began to recognize that members of one culture tend to make assumptions and draw corresponding conclusions about other cultures based upon their own values. They began to observe more critically their own, often narrow perception of foreigners—achieving one of the major objectives of the standards initiatives: "The erroneous judgements that result from...assumptions, born of a lack of adequate information, understanding, and sensitivity, eventually lead to negative reactions to members of different cultures." (*Standards*...1996: 44)

Learning to understand and appreciate cultural diversity is a built in and natural component of a Foreign Language course where non-American born students are in attendance. The American right to free speech and religious choice, for example, which Americans often take for granted, was given a new and poignant voice in a foreign language classroom: "How lucky you are not to have seen what I saw in Sarajewo," said one community college student who had recently Immigrated from Bosnia and was studying French. In an ESL class, an assigned reading focussed on the Holocaust. Most foreign-born students were shocked at the admission of a Chinese student who had never before heard of the Nazi Holocaust. A Polish-born student amazed his classmates with his superior knowledge of American history—he knew as much, if not more about American slavery than the African Americans in the class.

During several SIG forums at ACTFL and at several Central States community college focus sessions, community college Foreign Language faculty expressed their strong advocacy for the diversity component in the national standards guidelines. Many interpret diversity in a broad sense. .The interaction between the often immature 18 year-old and the older, more goal-oriented older adult creates a learning environment where each learns something valuable from the other: the younger students begin to prepare daily assignments more regularly as they observe how much better able their older counterparts are able to speak and understand the foreign language; the older students gain a respect for the peer and career pressures facing young people today. Since older students tend to be more focused than younger ones on

applying their learning and more motivated to complete their education, they serve as excellent role models for their younger classmates (Lively 1997: 34). In a study conducted by William Giezkowski, the author points out that older students "Bring with them a sobering dose of pragmatism that cannot help but affect the learning environment. Their life experiences enrich classroom discussions and force both students and teachers to test theory against reality in a variety of disciplines..." (1992: B3-B4). Friendships develop beyond the classroom: many community college Foreign Language faculty observe the "mixing of age groups" in the student union and cafeteria where an attempt is frequently made to carry on a conversation in the foreign language; some teachers noted further that study groups were being established before important exams which included 18-20 year-olds and non-traditional, older students.

Affordable tuition, an open enrollment policy, a full-time coordinator for students with special needs and a full-time registered nurse with experience in dealing with physically challenged students makes the community college an excellent place for students with disabilities to begin their college education. The American Disabilities Act has greatly influenced both the physical environment and instructional methodology at the community college. More and more physically challenged students are studying foreign languages. If one of the standards' goals is directed at assisting students in developing the ability to respect and understand the values and perspectives of people with different cultural practices then the foreign language classroom is also an appropriate setting for our students (and faculty) to learn to interact with the physically disabled with kindness, patience and respect. While community college Foreign Language teachers acknowledge the enormous challenges they face in instructing Foreign Language to students with disabilities, they also recognize that designing custom made assignments and tests for students with special needs is also a professional growth experience for them. Watching their own students gain tolerance and understanding of the diverse needs of their physically challenged classmates, is a lesson in sensitivity training which is perhaps more important than learning the foreign language itself.

The *Communities Standard 5.2: Students show evidence of becoming life-long learners by using the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment* is nowhere better represented than in the American community college foreign language classroom. Many business men and women who conduct business in a foreign country and retired, older adults who have time and money to travel enroll in community college foreign language courses. They are vital to the community college Foreign Language programs not only because their numbers are increasing and their enrollment is at times a deciding factor in whether a class "makes," or is cancelled, but also because they demonstrate to the younger, more traditional college student, that

foreign language education has a relevance within all of life's stages. It is quite common that the student seeking "personal enjoyment and enrichment" by studying a foreign language will complete the college's entire sequence of classes in a given language. What may have begun as a "trial-run" to see if indeed one could enjoy learning a foreign language (remember: many older students had taken a foreign language in high school or college under the "translation-grammar model") has turned into a "serious hobby." Two notable cases: at the St. Louis Community College, two retired adults—a retired physician and a retired optical supplies sales representative attended one month courses at two different Goethe Institutes in Germany. Their experiences were extremely positive and the PR value for the college's German program invaluable.

The following example of the students enrolled in a spring and a fall 1997 Intermediate German class at the St. Louis Community College/ Meramec campus serves as a poignant illustration of the diverse student body enrolled in most community college Foreign Language classes. Within this one class there was:

- a 45 year-old government employee with the Defense Mapping Agency who never went to college before but was interested in learning German in order to qualify for transfer into the agency's international department
- a secretary and homemaker whose family was hosting a German high school student for the year
- a hearing impaired student who was assisted by a sign-language professional who had herself studied German
- an 18 year-old who had participated in his high school exchange program, had lived with a German host family for three weeks and was communicating regularly with the family in German via e-mail.
- a college academic advisor whose son was in Germany for the year on a Bundestag scholarship
- a retired air-force major who was pursuing a second career in anthropology, studying German and French at the same time and who soon would be enrolling in the college's one year Arabic program.
- a 29 year-old international business major who had worked as a chef for several years in a St. Louis Bistro

- a sophomore enrolled in the college's Interior Design Program who had been selected to participate in a two month internship program in Germany where she would be assigned to an interior design company, while living with a German host family[3]

CONCLUSION

I have attempted, in this article, to demonstrate two important aspects related to foreign language education in the community college: With its increasing enrollment and wide range of diversity among its student body, the community college plays and will continue to play a significant role in the teaching of foreign language. The ACTFL standards have already had a positive influence on how Foreign Language are being taught in the community college and this will continue to grow. The unique position of the community colleges between the high schools and the four-year transfer institutions, gives the community college Foreign Language educators a special insight into the absolute necessity of promoting and maintaining good articulation, if the standards movement in Fl education is to be successful. All matters pertaining to articulation must remain integral components of the standard guidelines, if the philosophy statement, so well expressed by the Standards Task force, becomes a reality in the years ahead: " The United States must educate students who are equipped linguistically and culturally to communicate successfully in a pluralistic American Society and abroad. This imperative envisions a future in which ALL students will develop and maintain proficiency in English and at least one other language." (Standards...1996: 7) And it is this very inclusiveness ,so closely aligned with the mission of the comprehensive, American community college, which is the heart and soul of Foreign Language education on the community college level.

Notes

[1]As a community college Foreign Language educator of many years, Houghton Mifflin asked me to review the first draft of the text and evaluate its merits from the view point of a community college teacher.

[2]The Olivia and Hill Press has published an entire English grammar series for students studying foreign language. In addition to Spinelli's text for those studying Spanish, their are texts available for students enrolled in Japanese, Italian, Latin, German and French.

[3]The author would like to thank Madeleine Lively for the idea of recognizing the diversity in backgrounds and goals of students who enroll in community college foreign language classes. Professor Lively was amazed at

the diversity of the students enrolled in one typical year in her French classes at Tarrant County Community Junior College, Northwest Campus, Texas. (See under References for full citation of Lively's article on this subject.)

References

Chalhoub-Deville, Micheline. "The Minnesota Articulation Project and its Proficiency-Based Assessment." In: *Foreign Language Annals* 30, 4: 492-502.

Eisenberg, Diane U., ed. 1992. *The Future of Foreign Language Education at Community, Technical and Junior Colleges.* Washington, D.C. : American Association of Community Colleges.

Gibson Benninger, Barbara S. and Ratcliff, James L. 1996 "Getting and Keeping the Best Faculty for the 21st-Century Community College." In: *Community College Journal of Research and Practice* 20,2: 151-67.

Giezkowski, William. "The Influx of Older Students Can Revitalize Teaching." In: *Chronicle of Higher Education* 25 March 1992: B3-B4.

Lively, Madeleine. 1997 "The Changing Demographics of the Traditional Student: Making our Classrooms Relevant for the New Generation." In: *ADFL Bulletin* 28, 3: 32-36.

National Standards in foreign Language Education Project. 1996 *Standards For Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century.* Yonkers: New York: American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

Outs, JoAnn. 1996. "Assessing Your Knowledge of English Grammar." Unpublished Assessment Test for French students at St. Louis Community College, Meramec Campus.

Shanker, A. 1995. "Raising the ceiling and the floor." *The New York Times*, June 14, 1995: E7.

Spinelli, Emily. 1998. *English Grammar for Students of Spanish,* 4th ed. Ann Arbor, MI: The Olivia and Hill Press.

Texas Association of Community Colleges. "Texas Association of Community College Report to College Presidents of Texas." Unpublished Report, 1996.

Appendix A

FOREIGN LANGUAGE PLACEMENT POLICY IN THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE:

For the use of students, foreign language faculty, counselors and academic advisors

Rationale:

While it may be tempting for students to enroll in a beginning foreign language course, even though they may have studied the same language in high school, there are many reasons to discourage this practice:

- Students will be bored in a beginning language course which assumes no prior knowledge.
- Students will intimidate those true beginners and contribute to a tense learning environment.
- Students may well fall into the common trap of acquiring a false sense of security: "I know all this material already"; they may do less homework and study less for tests and consequently receive lower grades **in spite** of past experience in the language.
- Students should take full advantage of having studied a foreign language in high school to develop higher level communication skills in the community college; enrolling in the appropriate level is the first step towards this goal.
- Students may find that foreign language courses which duplicate work done in H.S. will often not be accepted by transfer institutions (i.e., they may not receive credit for them)
- Students will find that better employment opportunities await those with a functional facility in a foreign language; the more courses one takes, the greater

the chance of achieving a working knowledge in a foreign language.

Placement Guidelines

- Incoming students with no previous language training or only one year of high school study should enroll in an Elementary 1 course.

- Students with two years of recent (within the last 4 years), of successful (A or B) high school language study or one semester at another college with a grade of C or better should enroll in an Elementary 2 course.

  Note: Students who have consistently received a grade of A in their foreign language course may enroll in an Intermediate 1 course. Before registering, however, they are advised to consult with a foreign language instructor in their chosen language.

- Students with 3 or 4 years of recent, successful high school foreign language study or one year college level should enroll in an Intermediate 1 course.

  Note: Students with 4 years of high school foreign language study who have consistently received a grade of A may opt for the Intermediate 2 course. Before registering, however, they are advised to consult with a foreign language instructor in their chosen language.

- Students who have recently and successfully completed 5 years of high school foreign language study should enroll in either an Intermediate 2 course or, if available, an advanced level course (in most cases, advanced conversation composition) For these students even an Intermediate 2 course which, though not a perfect match, is a better alternative than *no* foreign language study.

- Students who have spoken at home the foreign language for which they wish to register or who have lived for a period of time or traveled extensively in the native country present a special placement problem. Most of these students understand and speak the language well, but have had little or no experience in writing or reading. Under no circumstance, should these students enroll in an elementary level course.

> **Note:** Certainly there may be exceptions made which can be determined by interviewing the student. (one instructor of German, for example, has found that such students fit best into a second semester course, due to the complexity of the German grammar.)

Following are some suggested options:

- Audit an elementary 1 and/or elementary 2 course to acquire, in a structured setting, basic grammatical concepts and forms; The student could then enroll in an intermediate or advanced course.

- Take the CLEP exam and get credit according to college policy (at St. Louis CC, for example, a student who passes the CLEP exam in a foreign language can receive 8 hours of credit, equivalent to Elementary 1 and 2 courses; at Bucks County Community College, students receive 6 or 12 credits depending on CLEP score) The student could then enroll in an intermediate or advanced level course.

- "Work through" on your own a basic first year text. Then consult with a foreign language instructor as to placement (usually intermediate or advanced level)

- Take a placement test, when available

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CCHA
Community College
Humanities Association

c/o Essex County College
303 University Avenue
Newark, NJ 07102

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 5300
NEWARK, NJ